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Monthly Poetry and Prose Magazine

GloMag

Edited by Glory Sasikala

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Editor & Publisher: Glory Sasikala
T17F Park Avenue, Vijay Shanthi
Vengadamangalam Road
Melakottaiyur
Chennai 600127
Tamil Nadu India
Tel: +(91) 9884363944
E-mail: glorysasikala@gmail.com

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ABOUT GLOMAG

GloMag brings out one hard copy per year, in February, the Valentine Issue. While there are no visual aids in the hard copy versions, the online version is enhanced by pictures accompanying the writings and the profiles. GloMag is the coming together of writers in their diverse manifestations, thoughts, and expressions, and the visual interpretation of these.

GloMag remains euphoria, engaging all your senses at once. Perhaps you are sitting in solitude beneath a bough, besides a lake, and you turn the pages. Time stands still, and you become engrossed, oblivious to anything but these beautiful writings, expressions, and pictures. Your soul dances in ecstasy, participates in a cosmic experience, it sways and chants. Somewhere someone is telling you about duality, someone tells you about a forlorn house without music, someone shows you how to love, and someone raises questions about existence itself.

And when you come to, the world is still there, the lake is still there, the birds are chirping, shadows have lengthened. Nothing feels the same! You are not the same! You get up reluctantly. It's time to go home.

~ ***Glory Sasikala***

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TONIGHT

tonight, will you give me a handshake
until I forget the corpses I walked on to
the freedom of lies and embrace
my lifelong status as a stateless refugee?

tonight, will you teach me how to speak English
so that the next generation will know that it's okay
to cry before pulling out a gun or flying above Gaza?

tonight, will you hug me until my sorrows fade away
and die in your arms, just like brothers do?
hold me and let go of your range before you regret anything.

tonight, my shadow will awaken from sleep and make its way

to the cemetery, where it will meet up with my childhood friends.

Because souls and shadows are friendlier than living, breathing humans.

Ahmad Al-Khatat: He is an Iraqi Canadian published poet and writer. In addition to his Pushcart Price 2020 nomination, he received a nomination for Best of the Net 2019. His poetry has been translated into other languages and his work has been published in print and online magazines abroad. He resides in Montreal, Canada, now with his spouse.

IMRU'AL-QAYS

Arab Prince

The stars shine with a cool glow over the desert.
Between grains of sand, longing slips through.
The wind tirelessly erases traces of past time
and mournfully sings a song of parting with a beloved.

In the silence, verses of love and desire are born.
Memory replays the happy moments of lovers.
Memories take on a bitter taste
like the ripe fruit of colocynth.

Centuries have passed,
yet the zephyr still whispers love spells.
It inscribed the poem on the stone at the Kaaba,
so letters of gold would capture
the beauty of the desert and feelings.

Alicja Maria Kuberska: She is an awarded Polish poetess, novelist, journalist, and editor. She is a member of the Polish Writers Associations in Warsaw, Poland and IWA Bogdani, and Albania as well as other organisations. She has received two medals—the Nosside UNESCO Competition in Italy (2015) and European Academy of Science Arts and Letters in France (2017). She has also received a reward of international literary competition in Italy, ‘‘Tra le parole e ‘elfinito” (2018). She was announced Poet of the Year 2017 by Soflay Literature Foundation. She also received the Bolesław Prus Prize Poland (2019), Culture Animator Poland (2019) and first prize Premio Internazionale di Poesia Poseidonia- Paestrum Italy (2019).

HOW LIFE PASSES

Where you sat the other day

See that chair that dead leaves spray

See the picture of decay

When the maple leaves were green

Rabbits on the lawn were seen

So many things might have been

What time brings one can foresee

But where is the time to be

What you want what sets you free?

Why these strange sad wayward thoughts?

Eyes have seen so many plots

That Fate weaves. Connect the dots.

How Life passes, fades away!

Fold your hands humbly and pray

Ere you pass, while you may.

Amita Sarjit Ahluwalia: I am a retired civil servant but at heart a poet and teacher. I write, mostly poetry, in English, Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi. I was awarded the NISSIM International Poetry Award (First Prize) 2019 and then the Reuel International Award (First Prize) 2020 for Non-Fiction Prose by The Significant League, a well-known Creative Writing Group on Facebook. The Destiny International Community of Poets based out of Wakefield, England, UK declared me Winner of their Poet of the Year 2020 as well as Critic of the Year 2020.

OLD DELHI STREETS

In utter mindfulness, our transcribed words on a sudden wind, towards a horizonless earth, the same fire etched in memories of the heart. you suddenly looking back at me was perhaps a muse, your hijab in true congruency, together we ran holding hands in the pelting rain, laughing at the nothingness we had both fallen in love.

Amitabh Mitra: He is an Indian-born South African physician, poet and artist. He is one of the most widely published poets globally.

FREYA, & THE GHOST OF DALI

The world recedes before me

A peeled glass onion

A coreless apple

Advancing women & forward robots

In rooms full of long, tall mirrors' sallies

Intuitive, crushed & broken vase pieces -

The world recedes behind me

In the thickets of fog/s & impenetrable night-mists

In unknown words & things

Places & people hawking her bare-backed beauty

In the elephants with long, tall, thin, pincer-legs unmoving

In the scent of green flowers nictitating

Dreams & half-buried treasures of memories

Songs' snatches that fleet by

In dark forests

Darker forest-fires micturating

Darkest

In

Doorless keyholes, & keychains

Keyless

The world recedes

Ampat Koshy: Dr. Koshy A.V. prior Assistant Professor (English literature), Jazan University, Saudi Arabia is currently working as Assistant Professor (English literature), Mt. Carmel College, Bengaluru. He has many books, degrees, diplomas, certificates, prizes, and awards to his credit, and is also an editor, anthology maker, poet, critic and writer of fiction. Two of his co-authored books published in 2020 were Amazon best-sellers in India and USA, namely, ***Wine-Kissed Poems*** with Jagari Mukherjee and ***Vodka by the Volga*** with Santosh Bakaya. He recently won a certificate in Italy for his poetry. His latest book is ***A Sonetto for the Poetic World/You heard the Scream, didn't you?*** co-written with Santosh Bakaya.

INTERIORS

You look at the glass in front,

imprisoned in a wooden frame, square.

The glass in front also looks

at you and whispers:

“you are so beautiful, everything

is wonderfully crafted in your body.

I’m looking at you with all

wonders in me and the world.

The god is so nice and kind

with you.”

You slowly retreat and start

searching inside your

skins and bones,

all imperfections and misdemeanor

in you, the mirror

can’t see, ever.

Aneek Chatterjee: He is a poet and academic from Kolkata, India. He has published several poems in literary magazines and anthologies across the globe. He has authored 17 books including five poetry collections titled ***Seaside Myopia; Unborn Poems and Yellow Prison; Of Ashes and Persiflage; Archive Avenue;*** and ***Last Evening Was A River***. He also co-edited the ‘Poetry Conclave Year Book 2022’. He received the ‘Alfredo Pasilono Memorial Panorama International Literary Award 2023’, conferred by the Writers Capital Foundation. He was a Fulbright Visiting faculty at the University of Virginia, USA, and a recipient of the ICCR Chair (Govt. of India) to teach abroad. His poetry has been archived at Yale University.

IN THE WINTER RAIN

When the winter rain

Makes me wet and I shiver

A little, I feel as if you

Hug me tightly laying side

By side in front of fireplace;

When the leaf winks

At us through the window

Soaked in the winter rain

You feel shy knowing it will

Not do you any harm like I

Do in the silence of the night.

When light goes off

You stare at the moon pacing

The night sky appreciating your

Beauty and you cling to me

Like a creeper and whisper into

My ears, “Love is so beautiful.”

Anil Kumar Panda (alias Tiku): He was born in a small town, Brajrajnagar, in Odisha, India. At present he is working in the coal mine sector and writes poems and stories when he gets time. He has already published two books of poems—***Fragrance of Love*** and ***Melody of Love***. He is working on his third book now. His poems have been published in many national and international anthologies. He loves to write romantic poems. He likes travelling and meeting people of different nationalities and cultures. He takes inspiration from the simple life of villagers and Nature’s beauty. He enjoys walking by streams and into forests to be with the flora and fauna.

FULL MOON NIGHT

I like the way he dangles a tinkle of stars from my ears

and strings their twinkle to my wrists

runs gently around my neck

and drops like a sigh at my bosom

When I turn away, I like how he dies

a sliver a night

singing to the skies the ghazals I write

until my pen, spent of its passion

lies breathing in the echoes of its own hush

The night is then a dark, dark interlude

before my song springs back to life on high

a sliver a night

He entices me to the window

that I keep veiled to muffle the titter of my bangles

He, as if oblivious to the flutter, croons

a ballad a night

until my anklets succumb to the crescendo

and break out of all bonds of modesty

The ground slips away briskly under my feet

and sweeps me under the resplendent sky

that flaunts its luminous bridegroom

who now waits to drink in his runaway bride

In Hinduism, the moon is considered to be male. It is personified as Chandra (also called Soma in some texts) and depicted as a male deity.

Anju Kishore: She is a Pushcart (Poetry) Prize 2022 and 2024 nominee, a Touchstone Award 2023 longlister, and an award-winning editor of numerous free-verse anthologies. Her book of poems, ***…and I Stop to Listen*** inspired by the civil war in Syria was published in 2018. Her poems are part of significant anthologies like Aatish 2, The Yearbook of Indian Poetry in English 2022 and 2023 (Hawakal and Pippa Rann Books, UK respectively), and Late-blooming Cherries 2024 (Haiku Poetry from India, Harper Collins). She has dabbled in online theatre and is currently exploring Japanese forms of poetry.

A SONG TO THE TWILIGHT

Ruby studded sky,

the horizon calls to me.

It knows my name by heart.

I have stood here all eternity,

watching a coral glow of evening,

as geese fly past the moon.

Stories of past lives

unfold before my eyes.

On wings of imagination

my mind takes flight.

The night is my master.

The night is my friend.

It folds me in its warm embrace,

darkness pulls me in,

like a lover waiting to be kissed.

I sing a song to the twilight

with voice soft and sweet.

Dancing stars join the refrain.

Night is my salvation,

its magic lives within.

Everlasting is its song

from beginning to the end.

Published by Mused Bella-Online, March 2019

Ann Christine Tabaka: I am a poet and writer residing in Delaware, USA. I am a retired organic chemist and a retired personal trainer. I have 17 published books. I was nominated for the 2017 Pushcart Prize in Poetry; nominated for the 2023 Dwarf Stars award of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Poetry Association; was the winner of Spillwords Press 2020 Publication of the Year (Poetic); my bio is featured in the "Who's Who of Emerging Writers 2020 and 2021," published by Sweetycat Press.

(a complete list of publications is available upon request)

AN OLD BRIDGE IN SNOW

While driving across an old Bridge in snow

That old truck had done crossed a 1000 bridges before it came to a dead still stop on a plank Road bridge in a 6 PM first snow of the season surprise

good thing they always made it a habit to haul around a two burner propane, just in case

The snow fell like silent glorious wishes from Heaven. They slow dripped two perfect cups of fresh ground bean coffee and ate the cinnamon glazed buns they bought for Sunday breakfast

slow piano music wound out in spirals from the car cassette deck, and they danced under the old bridge's pointed rooftop, their hearts lit like long burning candles,

and then they drove home completed.

Anne Tibbitts: She has been writing since she was in third grade. She loves telling stories: she loves to write, to create, to teach, to educate, to laugh, ,to travel (in the old days lol) and now she's settled into a cozy and quaint little writing studio by the Mississippi river where she can craft her new poems and re-craft her old poems. Anne is grateful for the academic career that she had but she is also grateful that it is behind her and she can relax and focus on whatever she feels like doing with her own work. That is true freedom.

REMINISCING RENDEZVOUS

I often find myself reaching for the phone,

Yearning to share a silly joke that crossed my mind,

Or to chat about the little dramas of family life,

And the ever-present politics at work.

There are moments when I want to confide in you

About the latest health concerns we've been dealing with,

To swap advice on home remedies and small comforts.

But then, a wave of realization washes over me.

I remember that you are no longer there to pick up!

You have ventured to a land far beyond,

A place where the cuckoos sing their eternal song!

You now reside in a realm of peace

Happily strumming your harp with serene contentment.

I wonder, do you hear me, my dear angel?!

Aparna Suresh: She holds many identities as a poet, writer, academic and a lover of literature. She has authored a poetry book titled ***Speck of a Soul*** (2019), coauthored and edited ***Painting Dreams*** (2020) and a book of quotes and poetry ***Snippets of the Soul*** (2021). She was the Editor of ***Metamorphosis*** a book devoted to Art and Poetry. She was awarded the 'Best Poet—Editor's choice' by Spectrum Awards in May 2021. Her poem ***Saviour's Destiny*** was long listed for IPR Annual Award 2020. She received 'Poet of the Year' award from Ukiyoto publishing house and ALS Women's Conclave. "She lives a life of Poetry" is her tagline.

COUCHES

It is early evening. He is out on his run.

Other than the jogger, how come there's no-one?

Will our streets de-people

To become traffic routes?

Will our parks and ovals be playfields for spooks?...

The jogger smells barbie smoke as the neighbours dine

Like Romans at a banquet, softly-reclined...

The neighbours are wonderfully, succulently fed,

Their couches are more Kingly than a King Size

Will this land become numb with the comforts of couches

And instead of being fit,

be a flop-house for slouchers?

These couches are pillowed, deep and plump.

Can you hear them groan from the weight they hump?

The neighbours are wonderfully, succulently fed,

Their couches are more Kingly than a King Size

The fumes of partying rise above the courtyards

And tustle and diffuse like aerial petards

On from the drinkin'

and finger lickin'

The jogger re-gears. His paces quicken...

He thinks of Cliff Young, aged 61

In the Sydney to Melbourne Marathon,

Barry Pittard: I am a poet, lyricist and short story writer, living in the Hinterland of Southeast Queensland, Australia. I am a retired (refreshed!) teacher and have also worked as an NGO among the socially marginalised. I have broadcast on social just and world music themes on community radio. In the theatre, I worked as an actor, director and writer. Presently, I am doing a personal dance sadhana, extensively using the superb music of Uma Mohan.

WORDLY WEAPONS

no weapon can wound

as deadly as words

not even water will wash away

its marks and its hurts

the power of its destruction

cannot be measured

the severity of its harm

can only be stored

by the victim

who has taken its punch

because words out of a mouth

will eat you up for lunch

Bevan Boggenpoel: The award-winning author, Bevan Boggenpoel, was born in Salt Lake, Port Elizabeth, South Africa. Boggenpoel completed both a Baccalaureate in Education and BA Honors in Languages at the Nelson Mandela University (NMU). His debut poetry collection was well received. He has written three more titles and co-authored three other titles. One of the books titled ***Madiba's Quotes and Anecdotes (Reflections and Conversations)*** sells at the online shop of the university. He is also an author at a South African website known as Litnet (South African Literature Network). He has published six writers' books through his publishing company Poetic Productions. He is a primary school teacher in Port Elizabeth.

SEA AND SEASHORE

You are the ocean, endless

I am but a tiny grain of sand

After being bathed countless times

By your great tides

Still wait for

Some more countless baths.

Each tide

Like a dream

Attracts me to its heart

But, every time

I am thrown back

To the shore of day's reality.

My soul expands

To billions and billions of sand grains

Uniting with them

I become the seashore

Then I take your endlessness

In my embrace.

Bharati Nayak: She is a bilingual poet, writer, editor, translator and reviewer hailing from Bhubaneswar, India. Her poems and writings have been published in nearly two hundred books, magazines, e-books and newspapers. She has published two poetry books in her native language Odia and eight English poetry collections as single author and co-author. She has translated Adiela Akkoo's book 'Lost In A Quatrain' into Odia. She has been felicitated by many literary groups and won awards of appreciation.

\

WHAT JADE LEARNED FROM KATRINA

She came from a coddled city
that sat in Dionysian comfort,
secure in the superiority
of human endeavor. Enter Nature

to deliver its own brutal parade
as water waltzed in, flooding bars
and open-air markets, sloshing
around, up to second stories. After,

Jade huddled with others in stadium seats
under the threadbare quilt of hope
and fake security, joining thousands
waiting for an incompetent state

to attend to the problem when,

in the end, she watched soldiers,

under orders to shoot

in order to keep the peace.

Bill Cushing: Called the "blue collar poet" by classmates after years in the Navy and later working on ships before returning to college at 37, Bill Cushing lived in several states and the Caribbean. He moved to California after earning an MFA from Vermont's Goddard College. He lives in Glendale with his wife and their son. Published extensively in print and online, Bill has four poetry collections: ***A Former Life*** (2019 Kops-Fetherling International Book Award); ***Music Speaks*** (2019 San Gabriel Chapbook Award; 2021 New York City Book Award); ***. . .this just in. .*** .; and ***Just a Little Cage of Bone*** (2024 American Writing Award finalist).

FILL MY HEART WITH SPRING…

I can hear the birds sing

For sure it is the song of Spring.

The winter gray has faded away,

And nature dons its colorful display,

Squirrels wake up from wintry slumber

Embarking on their marathon number.

Meandering bees collecting drops of nectar

To nodding blooms softly whisper.

Verily coldness of hearts melts away

As seasons of festivities are in full sway

Somewhere a limping heart looks at the sky

Praying to be given another try.

For it too is entitled to colors of spring

When dreams and fantasies take wing

To walk the valley where elixir flows,

Unmindful of woes and throes.

For each life yearns for blissful reasons

So to start afresh, let Spring be the season.

Bilquis Fatima: She loves Nature and speaks for social issues in the form of short articles and speeches. ***Poetic Aroma*** is her first published book of poems, and she is a regular contributor to GloMag and On Fire Cultural movement. Her poems have also been published in several publications and commended by various other national and international publications. She has also contributed to some Anthologies, 'Queen' published by Vishwa Bharti Research Center being the first one, Nostalgia by Prose and Poetry Group, Inked Thoughts by The Impish Lass Publications, The Roseate Anthology, Ruddy Ravens and Cheshire cats and Rusty Rats by The Significant League group, being the latest one.

HOPE

Hope is that flickering light,

Showing us the path

All throughout a darkened tunnel

Hope is in the little stars

Twinkling in a moonless sky,

As we watch them smiling

When a deadly night ends,

With sun rays dispelling the darkness

Hope wakes up in us, consoling

When for us everything is lost

As we bemoan, hope pats on our back,

Encouraging

For beggars on the street

With no food, no shelter

Hope lies straight as a road to walk over, on and on, ahead

Bishnu Charan Parida: He is a bilingual poet from Jajpur Road of Odisha. Professionally an engineer though, he loves poetry. His poems have been published in many anthologies and magazines of national and international repute. He has been awarded in the state level Kalinga Nagar book festival, Odisha in 2015, honored in the 11th Guntur International Poetry Festival, honored as a World Featured Poet 2019 of Pentasi-B, China. He also received the 8th R.N.Tagore award from X-press Publications, Kerala.

GUILTY PARTIES

it’s easy to say just leave

you got the patience of a saint

why don’t you just go?

why do you stay?

with the abuse, the shit

just run for freedom

leave it all behind

think about yourself

well my friend

I think about it

every day

but I can’t leave my guilt behind

all these places you wanna go

old friends you wanna meet

with time running fast

maybe running out for you

think what is real

or just fantasy

of broken dreams

and it seems my friend

how can I go?

when I can't leave my guilt behind

Brian Mackenzie: I was born in Inverness in 1949 and lived there until 1969. Since then, I lived in London and Saudi Arabia. I have worked most of my life in the Airline Industry, which enabled me to travel the world quite easily and cheaply. I am now retired and have lived in Spain for the last ten years. I only started writing since I retired in 2009 and it is only in the last few years that I started writing songs and poems and I suppose have become quite prolific. I have published 14 books of poetry, 8 self-published and 4 books were published by a publisher.

RAGE AND AFTERMATH

We spill words, like water. Gushing out,
they flow through the taps of our mouths,
hot, as on a sunny day,
the choked pressure of our hearts eases.

Soon, silence follows.
As if silence is a heavy object,
we feel its weight upon us.

We then let out words again,
this time dribbling, slowly,
devoid of internal pressure.

Brindha Vinodh: Her poems have been widely published. Her book of poems ***Autumn in America & Other Poems*** is available on Amazon. She is the recipient of Poesis Award for Excellence in Poetry and the Reuel International Prize for poetry with an honourable mention.

THIS GORGEOUS SPOIL

Have you perished? Little death faced moth

–face upturned in rictus.

How the divining of your immolation looks–

how quiet the window, now your incessant knock is forfeit

do we lay down as stealthily, with urgent murmur

and finding our grave awaiting, sleep the long sleep?

I think we fight against such things, fates*mi media Naranja**

we spend our entirety, seeking some other divination

than the rinse of dirt and perishment, cloying our dreams

for we are restless, urging creatures, given over to acts

of cruelty, of splendor–

and in those shallow epochs, dear death faced moth

from our very start in cradle, we turn our milk curded heads

and face away from dying, like weed seeks one inch of soil

to rise, unexpected and flourishing–

never ever succumbing, till the bell tolls, beyond our hour

then I fear, we fight our fate, as ocean labors against moon

an exultant madness it is, a far-flung spice, the heart of

a wild thing, galvanizing to savage end

for no unbound passion be greater than

this breathing insanity, this gorgeous spoil.

My half orange, a love term in Spanish.

Candice Louisa Daquin: She is of Sephardi French/Egyptian descent. Daquin worked in publishing in Europe before immigrating to America to become a Psychotherapist. She's Senior Editor at Indie Blu(e) Publishing and Editorial Associate with Raw Earth Ink. She edits for The Pine Cone Review, Tint Journal, Parcham Literary Magazine & others. Daquin is co-editor of the award-winning anthologies *SMITTEN This Is What Love Looks Like: Poetry by Women for Women*, *The Kali Project: Invoking the Goddess Within / Indian Women's Voices*, *The New Condemned: Contemporary Albanian Poetry in English*, and *Love Letters to Ukraine from Uyava.* Her latest personal collection is ***Tainted by the Same Counterfeit*** (Finishing Line Press, 2022).

SUSPENDED

In a world where gravity had lost its restraint, people floated aimlessly in the sky like

lost balloons. One man, however, refused to accept this new reality and clung onto the ground

with all his vigor. He dug his feet deep into the soil and rooted himself like a tree. As he

watched others drift by, he couldn't help but wonder if he was the crazy one for staying

grounded. But then, a group of clouds came together and formed a staircase leading up to

harmony with humanity. The man smiled, finally able to ascend without leaving the earth

behind.

Carl Scharwath: He has appeared globally with 180+ journals selecting his writing or art. Carl has published four poetry books and his latest book is ***The World Went Dark*** published by Alien Buddha Press. Carl has four photography books, published with Praxis and CreatiVingenuitiy. His photography was exhibited in the Mount Dora and Leesburg Centers for the Arts. Carl is currently an art editor at Glitterati and former editor for Minute Magazine. He was nominated for four The Best of the Net Awards (2022-25) and two different 2023 Pushcart Nominations for poetry and a short story.

CALLER ID

Crow kept cawing at

kitchen window.

This one had his breakfast,

what is he asking for

wondered grandma

who has a Android.

Gone are the days of letters

guests hardly arrive

without informing,

she checked,

messages,

WhatsApp

nothing

then said

crow hasn’t updated…

She has a caller ID

where a crow keeps cawing.

Chandramohan Naidu: He is a retired bank employee, now a freelance writer and photographer based in Chennai, part of the poetry circle which meets first Wednesday of every month. He writes poems to be subsequently brought out into a collection.

MAMMOTH ISLAND

Isolated and inbreeding, relics

Of a past elsewhere caught in death-shroud

Here the ice-age an island presence sticks

Cut off from what has come. On the mainland

The thaw of earth and those apes endowed

With spears and hatchet-minds made their demand

To dominate at all cost. They're not here

Quite yet, round the dawning of the pyramids

A few mammoths stumble on, even rear

Their last few young, the end they cannot see

Evolution lacks nostalgia, forbids

The wished-for reprieve from mortality

Noble prey of our ancient patriarchs

You shared with us a struggle to survive

All meet a common predator which marks

Our tracks. As we pray for an exception

Shall we ebb on an island, cease to thrive?

Is there earthy hope of an exemption?

Christopher Villiers: He is an English poet based in the county of Devon. He has Bachelor and Master Degrees in Theology from Durham University and has written for academic journals on that subject. He is the author of four books of poetry and his poems often take the form of dramatic monologues from characters in history mythology and religion. He works as a freelance writer and when not writing enjoys reading widely, walking and exploring different cultures.

SAID THE EVERGREEN

“Touch me, said the evergreen to the snow
dress me all in white, let me glow
too soon, you’ll melt away
in the light of warmer days
but embrace me for this moment
before you go

We share this lonely twilight, you and I
wrap yourself around me, for I’m not shy
though I don’t fear summer’s heat
winter is my favorite treat
when the leaves of lesser trees
all wave goodbye

the whisper of the wind's the only sound
all my friends have gone to ground
or flown away till springtime comes around

Paint me, like an artist with a brush
cover up my scars with your tender touch
let me dream my winter dream
in a moonlit forest scene
before the hands of Time return me
to the dust."

Dale Adams: He lives in Bethany Oklahoma with his wife Tami and their dog Heidi. He enjoys reading history and science. He has worked in building maintenance and repair, in factories, on water wells, as an auto mechanic and auto parts specialist, and in security. He was 51 when he wrote and recorded his first original songs, and poetry publications in Warriors With Wings Anthology, and Fallen Angel Anthology followed. Dale has established SoundCloud and YouTube Channels, and has converted poems into songs for other poets, including Christine Tabaka and Michael Lee Johnson.
https://soundcloud.com/dale-adams-272904153
https://www.youtube.com/user/DrBuggs13

MY FIRST COMMUNION

-The Communion is a very good thing

Because you receive the Lord

Mom said.

Although the day before

We went to put bunches of flowers

To decorate the altar

Of the parish church

I knew this was a story

Because my friend “Boca negra” had told me

That they were Milan wafers.

They called him “Boca negra”

Because he was always eating

Sweet coal

Like the one that had been given to him

Santa Claus and the Three Wise Men

When he was little.

He was the one who told us

That the Three Wise Men

Were our parents

Before our mom took us

To take the first Communion.

Daniel de Culla: I am a Daniel de Culla, poet, writer, etc., residing in Burgos, Spain. I am retired. I have also published poetry, anthologies more than seventy.

CLOUDS

Mamma is a cloud

Her face is drawn
in the veins of a leaf

She always wanted
to fly above the trees

Mamma is a leaf
floating on the wind

The clouds shape themselves
into her dreams

David Norris: He lived in Asia for 30 years. He resided in Seoul, where he lectured in writing and literature for the University of Maryland University College-*Asia* on US military bases all around the peninsula. His work has appeared in *The Chariton Review, Taproot Literary Review, Poetry San Francisco, USA Deep South* online, and *The Dan River Anthology.* David was born in the small town of Covington, Virginia, way up in the Alleghany Mountains. He left when he was 20 and has been traveling ever since.

LOVE AND ORWELL

Within the four walls

Amidst the book of history, civics, and politics

Inside the University Library

I spotted a fiction.

It spoke about a land named Oceania.

Oceania was ruled by an absolute power.

Power of the Big Brother

Big Brother being challenged…

I saw two post-graduates

Entwined within themselves

I saw two merged physical entities.

Entangled with each other

I was angry

I was horny.

I, T26739365 Beta Version

I, Robot of Weston Company

I felt alive!!

Debraj Moulick: It's the time to think beyond the human point of view. The posthuman is here, an amalgamation of humans and technology (cyborg, android or robots, and much more). There could be aliens too, they might be watching you just like the government is keeping a surveillance tab on your activities. Hush!

Debraj over here!

THE LADIES

The Ladies.

Some will love only the winners,

But,

Some may love you even if you're blind,

Some may love you even if you're an alcoholic,

a drug addict or unemployed.

Some may love you even if you happen to be minus a leg,

Some may love you even if you don't love yourself.

Some may love you even if you're hearing impaired,

And they have to shout.

Some may love you even if you've had a stroke,

Some may love you even if you're a con artist,

a criminal or a prisoner,

Some may love you even if you're a liar and a thief.

Some may love you even if you're sad,

depressed, and full of woe.

They may still love you…

Some say that they don't know why they love you,

But they still do...

God bless them all.

Dr. Deena Padayachee: He is a medical doctor, a graduate of Natal University in South Africa. He is the recipient of the Olive Schreiner and Nadine Gordimer prizes for prose. His poems have been published in India (GloMag), the United Kingdom, the USA, Australia and South Africa. His book of liberation poems, ***A Voice from the Cauldron*** was published during Apartheid in 1986. Some of his oeuvres have been translated into Xhosa, Zulu, Tamil, Hindi and Italian. He has been invited to speak at literary conferences at universities in Germany, India, Denmark, Mauritius, the USA and South Africa.

MEMORIES OF YOU

A shrivelled bedsheet and a creasy pillow

Reminds me of a story sung on fire and ice

A shrivelled bedsheet and a creasy pillow

Tells of a dream that spun its way into night's arms

A shrivelled bedsheet and a creasy pillow

Flows tears of ecstasy stars shed as dew in blue eyes

A shrivelled bedsheet and a creasy pillow

Holds a racing heart and a steamy sigh

A shrivelled bedsheet and a creasy pillow

Holds shards of my incomplete poetry

A shrivelled bedsheet and a creasy pillow

Is all that I have left of you

Dr. Deepti Singh: I am a doctor by profession and a writer by passion. I love to write poetry and prose on nature and human psychology. I am a silently keen observer who finds liberation in penning it all. I find music and books as my best companions.

WARPED CHIRALITY

We are meant to be part of the same species yet you forge your own warped realities

Pretending confessing announcing orating your alternative existence from ideas

Born from your elected ignorance – Listening absorbing accepting broken lullabies

From hoarse false poison-tipped tongues of larks whispering untruths spinning words

But you allow your essence to soak up its negativity garnered from deformed misguided

Mentalities now so twisted you just cannot resist owning that leaking lying legacy –

You see me as an unknown racial oddity not knowing my true mixed race genealogy

As you burn your obvious dislike for me through my startled pores but I see you

As a lonely lost soul indoctrinated by spiral ideologies bleeding through you for

Generations whose voices now whisper even taunting you to throw that stone

Clutched in your shaking hand. Your conflicting inner rage I can somehow

Understand even pity you but here I am, about to become just another

Statistic of divisive rhetoric and there you are, contemplating my fate – Just

Another unfortunate fatality in our warped Chirality…

Don Beukes: He is a South African, British and EU Poet and writer and Poetry Chapbook Reviewer at The Poetry Café. He is the author of ***The Salamander Chronicles; Icarus Rising-Volume 1 (ABP);*** and ***Sic Transit Gloria Mundi***. He taught English and Geography in both South Africa and the UK. His poetry has been translated into various languages. He was nominated for the 'Best of the Net' in 2017 as well as the Pushcart Poetry Prize (USA) in 2016. He was published in his first SA Anthology 'In Pursuit of Poetic Perfection' in 2018 (eBook) and his second 'Cape Sounds' in 2019. He is also an amateur photographer.

BRIDE OF COPPER

homonyms that mean the same

or, your gray is not my grey

they have divergent offspring

bronze if copper mates with zinc

brass if copper mates with tin

bird as vulture, bird as dove

a painter’s silver, or smudge

the flat wilderness of dusk

an opaque landscape of mist

the nothingness of a coin

dime-like or silver florin

man hidden within the war

yours a Southern uniform

mine’s a museum’s armor

Duane Vorhees: He grew up in rural Ohio, fell in love, went to school, fell in love, stuck his toe on bits of four continents, fell in love, taught and learned various subjects, fell in love, grew chronologically and physically. Fell in love, fell in love fell in love. ***Love's Autobiography*** is the first part of a longer meditation, ***The Many Loves of Duane Vorhees***. It is based on a lifetime of observation, imagination, introspection, experience, and fantasy.

ORIGINS

Translated by Dorota Stępińska

In memory of Ralph Bunche

winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1950.

He believed that

man is not deprived of goodness,

but he should bring it out of himself.

It's a mistake

to divide people

on the basis of their origin.

Harmony in the world

should exist not only for colour blind people.

They, unable to differentiate skin colours,

Know well

what tolerance and acceptance mean.

He was striving to

give back

the words peace and freedom

their original

meaning.

Wars are not only about fighting and suffering,

but also about loss of dignity.

Everyone should be able to

look forward to a new day.

Life must be given a chance!

Eliza Segiet: She graduated with a Master's Degree in Philosophy from Jagiellonian University. She received the Global Literature Guardian Award from Motivational Strips; Laureate Naji Naaman Literary Prize 2020; International Award Paragon of Hope (2020); the World Award 2020 Cesar Vallejo for Literary Excellence; Laureate of the Special Jury Sahitto International Award 2021, World Award Premiul Fănuș Neagu 2021; BHARAT RATNA RABINDRANATH TAGORE INTERNATIONAL AWARD (2022); Award - World Poets Association (2023); and Laureate Between words and infinity International Literary Award (2023). She was nominated for the Pushcart Prize 2019, 2021, and 2024.

THE OCEAN
A brief glimpse into the life of fishes

What is the volume of a large land-studded ocean?
For the fish, the sea-universe extends and looks the same
in all direction except for the exosphere – the beautiful
deadly quantum skin of water often peppered with
out-watery asteroid-ships –

or what little is known, thanks to study of the remnants
of the few that crashed to the ocean-floor; yet fish-physics
cannot explain everything. At present it has not evolved
enough to calculate the distance to the boundary
of earth's postulated heliosphere.

The philosophy of Pisceristotle; Copernicrustus' genius
The brilliance of da Vinchark and other – the odes
of Shaketopusphere, the logic of Darwinkarel
and the relative Einstardine…

and others that advanced the fish civilization, gloriously
surviving wars and acts of nature. See them celebrate and mourn
each whale birth and carcass; see them Skydive past the
water-sphere and celebrate the omniscient Loch Ness
with dragon dancing across a sacred lake.

Feby Joseph: Well known in concentric circles, Feby Joseph is a part-time procrastinator, and a full-time piano teacher from Mumbai. In the spare time, that he doesn't have, Feby dabbles in poetry and hopes to do for it, what Einstein did for the electric can opener. Some of his works have been published in The Bombay Literary Magazine, Zoetic Press, The Bangalore Review and Café Dissensus.

THE GIFT

No skies, open limits,

the gift to you.

The pure glide

of every step

parts clouds

with the heart

of this

sacred grace.

Ferris E Jones: He is an award-winning, internationally published poet and screenwriter living in Puyallup Washington. His work has appeared in both print and online magazines including as the featured poet for Creative Talents Unleashed. He is the recipient of two grants from the Nevada Arts Council and the Editor/Publisher of Nevada Poets 2009. Ferris has twice received honorable mention awards from Writers Digest annual screenwriting contest. He is also the Author/Editor of seven collections of poetry. He features the work of other poets in the Inquisition Poetry website every month. The goal of this site is to spread the word of poetry throughout the world.

www.inquisitionpoetry.com

NOW I KNOW WHY THERE SHOULD BE LUNATICS IN EVERY TOWN

Now I know why

There should be lunatics in every town.

Though their sight pollutes the town,

Like okpehe* they sweeten the town.

From Okponu Peter to Ibrahim Taiwo.

From Anthony Achineje to Patrick Ocheiga

From Olingo Abuka to the last

Ever since they passed on

Empty of sense of humour

Aila have lost her sanity.

Laughter fled the community

Peace lost her immunity

Brothers in arms against brothers

Mothers in tears against murders.

Now I see why

There should be lunatics in every town.

local spice that smells.

Francis Otole: He is a Nigerian-born poet and academician. He is a member of the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) and many other literary groups. He is an award-winning poet from the local and international scenes. He has been featured in magazines, journals and anthologies locally and internationally. He is a graduate of the prestigious Benue State University and a student of life. His hobbies are reading and writing. He is married with two children.

MYTHICAL

I have sent you a poem
its verses - love's rusty leaves
falling relentlessly
in a mythical downfall of time
autumn - the first step
of a plausible pretext.

I have sent you a poem
its verses hide the phoenix bird
sparkle of your heartbeat,
your wings of morning light,
the rustling of the metaphors
rising over the walls of silence
as a tangle of rose stalks.

I have sent you a poem

rooted in the sigh of the night,

its verses –

the silver moon river waves

splitting the darkness

settled on your barely open lips.

Francisc Edmund Balogh: He is a Romanian poet and musician residing in the UK. He works as teaching assistant in London. He writes mainly in Romanian and English and occasionally in Spanish and Hungarian. He has received 1st place at L'Olimpiade Mondiale de Poesie contest, 2020-2021; best foreign author at the 2022, of I COLORI DELL'ANIMA; and The best poem at 'Days turn into night' poetry competition 2024, India. A couple of Francisc's poems was published in the French literary blog 'Lettres Capitales'; published in the 'Vort Vergessen' anthology from Germany; in the 'Azahar' Spanish language magazine; and a couple in World Poetry tree.

BIRTHDAY MUSINGS

The years pass me by

Cradling me in utmost love

I smile, life smiles back.

Gargi Sarkhel Bagchi: She is the winner of '*The Reuel International Poetry Prize 2022*', '*The Indian Women Rising Star for Literature 2023*', '*The National Chanting Bards Award, 2023*', '*The R.P. Sharma's Poetic Present for Poetry Rendition 2023*', '*The Poiesis Award for Excellence in Literature 2023 & 2024*', '*The Panorama International Youth Literature Award 2024*', '*The WE Illumination Award 2024 for Language, Discourse, Participation*' and '*The WE Gifted Poet Award 2024 for Magic of Poetry*'. Her debut poems titled ***Two Cents For My Thoughts*** was launched at the prestigious Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. It has won the '*Rama Chowdhury Memorial Award for the Best English Poetry Collection 2023*' and the '*Panorama Golden Book Awards 2024*'.

NIGHT

she slips on his memories,

hitting her head

on the jagged edges of yesterday.

the floor holds her

like a question

long forgotten.

ghosts of answers

dance in circles,

reaching,

but unable to touch her.

DAY

it is supposed

to bring light,

but the sun today

is on fire,

burning every desire,

bleaching every single trace

of those memories,

leaving the corpse unidentifiable

an almost perfect crime,

but for the blood.

Gauri Dixit: When not busy working in her office, she is busy being a traveller, climbing mountains, capturing the voice of a solitary flower blossoming from a rock or the bird sitting on a hanging branch, sometimes the setting sun or the sea in her camera as well as in the words she weaves. That she has been a part of many anthologies as well as a Reuel Prize awardee and had commendable mention at Destiny's Poet is incidental. In her first book, ***In My Skin, I Find Freedom***, there are poems on varied subjects, yet there is a common thread of a skeptical questioning mind of a free woman.

BARE TREE

At the ravishing azure sky

Withered leafless branches stare

The bare tree stands desolate

Time makes seasons so cruel

Unclothed branches get thirsty

Look up for a shower of joy

Whispering wind reminds

Beautiful green days of youth

Ah! how far is the spring!

The sky spreads a hue of hope

Dribbling new dreams

Restless branches look forward

Crave for a new life

In love with the floating clouds...

Gayatree G Lahon: Hailing from Assam, Gayatree G Lahon is a teacher by profession and a poet by passion. She is a post-graduate in English literature from Gauhati University. She is closely akin to nature and her poems delineate her feelings beautifully. Being a true aesthete, she finds beauty in every aspect of life and Nature and her ink pours those elements in a profound way. Even the complexities of life compel her to scribble in her own way. Her poems have been published in various anthologies and magazines, both in India and abroad.

THE WISEST FOOL

I am the citizen of my country and the universe as well,

Still then I am a master of a microcosm,

Here in my circle I know everything and many things too.

I know the world truly transitory

A zero base exists today, is extinct tomorrow.

This is fragile life, a rolling dew drop,

Greening a blade of grass or no, vanishing.

Thus go the civilized and the uncivilized living.

Keeping nothing back I relate this tale,

You are a real witness to what happens.

Why should we ward off the inevitable reality?

Man is created worried, and broken he goes,

Melting into insignificance like a convict.

Making weapons and hoarding wealth I sing of humanity—

I beget bleeding hearts and wailing eyes

What a clear irony I am consciously aware of!

Man is born not for any other cause, the sterilized bluff,

But for a loss, both earthly and spiritually

Save a strong few, who on earth are not wisest fools.

Dr. Gazi Abdulla-hel Baqui: A poet, writer, translator, and a university professor, he has already authored twenty-seven books and many of his poems, articles and stories have been published in different newspapers, magazines, journals, periodicals, etc. Besides being awarded internationally for his poetic accomplishments, he has many a time been honored by different organizations of Bangladesh for his contribution to literature, education and research. A solo cassette album of his eleven poems called ***Visions*** and his poems in some anthologies have been published by The National Library of Poetry, Maryland. His prize-winning poems on 'Peace' have been published in Official Catalogues by Cultura-e-Societa, Torino, Italy.

December breeze

Pleasantly cold

Blows at tiny dry leaves.

The temple, silent, is lit

The trembling bright flames

Flicker, in the misty night,

The hanging lamps

Gently swing,

But for the priest

Sitting in meditation

The temple is empty

Shivering banyan leaves

Make an orchestra

The rest of the trees

Look lonely and sad

It is a long wait.

Geeta Varma: She is a poet based in Chennai. She has published three books of poems—***To My violin; Twilight Ours*** (with her husband Shreekumar Varma); and ***Through the Window***—and has contributed to various anthologies and journals.

FOLDED

I wipe the dust of recurring thoughts,

Like feet that walk the beaten path,

And yet don't notice the tiny surprises,

Hidden as daisies behind rocks,

Moonlight behind gray clouds,

Colourful shells lying supine on the shore!

I see the mundane as I wipe away calloused footprints,

Folded now and creasing with time,

Waiting for the day I would dust away,

The day that yawns into the torpor of ennui,

Until I iron out the creases to let newer surprises loom,

As the mundane hangs on a clothesline of bleached laundry,

In the backyard of my mind.

Geethanjali Dilip: Professor of French heading Zone Francofone, poet by passion, her poetry books include, ***Geethatmaa , Song of the Soul; Hansa Geetham- Song of the Celestial Swan; Poetry Voice- Geeth Dhvani; Soul Riff; Atmatarang; Rosée- The Dewdrop; Beads of Poesie - Mani Geetham; The Reverie- Swapna Geetham;*** and ***Poetry Forest – AaranyaGeetham.*** Recipient of 'The Reuel International Award for Poetry', awardee in the category of commendable mention for her poem at 'The Great Indian Poetry Contest'; recognition of exhibiting "literary brilliance par global standards"-Gujarat Sahitya Akademi, Indian Women's Achievers Award from Asian Literary Society, she curates Yercaud Poetry Festival, since 2018, believing that poetry connects the world.

IT SURE FELT RIGHT!

Maybe the rains should not have fallen so hard

outside the window

the pitter patter of raindrops on leaves

the day slowly darken so early in the morning

the wet sparrows on the railing beneath the red tiles of the roof shaking out the water and squabbling

maybe we should not have watched them together and smiled

maybe it should not have been so warm and cozy inside the room; or the lights so dim, throwing shadows

maybe there should not have been the proximity

that made us look into each other's eyes

throwing out into open the blatant truth we tried so hard to deny

maybe your touch was the warmth I sought on a cold day

your breath in mine, knowing your fragrances for the first time

maybe we should not have kissed and blocked out the world

Maybe it was all a mistake...

Glory Sasikala: She is a writer, poet and editor and publisher living in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. She is the author the ***'Sundays With Glory Sasikala'*** series of short stories on Amazon. She is the author of the ***'Glorees Poems'*** series on Amazon. She is the Editor and Publisher of GloMag, an International Poetry and Prose Magazine; she is the administrator of the GloMag Group on Facebook. She is also a published novelist with two novels to her credit: ***Goodbye Papa*** (Writers Workshop, Kolkata) and ***She Spoke In Tongues*** (Setu Mag).
https://www.amazon.in/dp/B0DH2Z45X6
https://www.amazon.in/Glorees-Poems/dp/B0C2D27V6B

LOVE SONG

there is a song in my heart but words for the lyrics become elusive

like rainstorms in the barren desert like dreams caught in the frozen tundra

struggling to string the words like pearls to a necklace

that i can adorn around your heart the words are there trying to free

themselves from memories they die before they are born

i stare at the blank music sheets; not a single musical note awakes from my dreams

they elude the pen and my fingers tremble; my grip is lost on the pen

maybe the words and the musical notes are lost in the deep void of our parting

and time is the thief that has stolen the words

maybe the distance between us has exacted sweet revenge

there are so many maybes; i search for answers i can't find

maybe if my eyes feast upon you, appraise you from the tip of your forehead

to every curvature of your anatomy

if i could hold you close to my heart and feel your every heartbeat

and your burning lips on mine, perhaps then the inspiration I long for

will be revealed like a spark from a flame will dawn like the early morning rising sun

that breaks through the dark clouds and the songs and notes will fill the musical sheets with words of love for you

Gonapragasen Naicker Aka Danny: He is an Indian born and brought up in South Africa. He has been fascinated by and has been writing poetry since his early boyhood. He has performed his poetry at various forums, including the Poetry Africa Festival, the Mauritian Writers' Association, and Glorioustimes, India. He is the Convenor of the Live Poets Society, Durban, South Africa.

CITY CHROMOSOME

Babus and *Bibis* turn into a circle of inferno,
swap places, not knowing where the winding
alleyways lead to ecstasy or curse.
the late night has claws and shards.

Crows and pigeons snuff out the calmness of
the morning purging the dissident minds.
cathedrals share space with the shining mall,
smoke filled pubs connect city people.

The broken rooftops and old bridges watch
astronomical clocks tracking stars and planets,
riots and conflict reshape the soul of its people
not the urban looks, nor the driven agenda.

Tourists bustle and absinthe mansions turn slowly
into a bohemian massif, a ramshackle mindset,
ghostly dryads dance in the ruins of palaces.
under the shaky porches, rusted iron railings.

Literature and myth live in every brick and stone
resolving even medieval alchemical mysteries.
whispers capture the fables, sing folk songs,
the city doesn't let go, either of you or me.

Gopal Lahiri: I am a bilingual poet, writer, critic and translator residing in Kolkata. I have contributed to various anthologies and have also published thirteen volumes of poetry in English and nine volumes in Bengali. In addition, I have also solo/jointly edited eight anthologies of poems in English and have one translation work of short stories of Israel, translated by me from English to Bengali. Two recently published books of mine are ***Anemone Morning and Other Poems*** and ***Responsive Reviews***. I am the first recipient of the Jayanta Mahapatra National Award for Literature, 2024. I was the first prize winner in a poetry contest organised by the 43rd World Congress of Poets.

MIST

Hazily fused into the sea of clouds;

individuality obscured amid the lurid

light of the blue spreading endless;

selfhood, uniqueness, as if

exiled from being, become defunct.

Beautiful forms faint in hue succumb

to oblivion in the realm of powerful grace.

Under the pleasant canopy when summer

bursts over, you will have forgotten me,

the weightless and abstract, formed

with a diaphanous texture that resembles poignancy.

Inevitable in the recurrence of the universal karmic cycle, Dear World, the remembrance

of me, when you wake up to see teeming

jasmines with cool dewdrops stored,

you will, at least, feel the dregs of my aura.

I exist.

Hein Min Tun: He is a multiple award-winning poet and writer hailing from Myanmar. He has received 'Distinguished Writer Award' from the Bharat Award for Literature for two consecutive times - 2022 and 2023. He has also achieved 'Tagore Honour' given by the Bengali Association of Poets- Literoma for his glittering pen. He has a successful book to his credit; his debut poetry collection ***Crescendo*** has earned him the 'Panorama Golden Book Award – 2024' conferred by Writers Capital International Foundation. Above all, Hein Min Tun is the Winner of the prestigious 'Reuel International Poetry Prize (2024)' for all the poems he has written so far.

LALITA SAKHI

A new series

1

He says, I have a rough mouth....my lips are made mauve with bruises.

He says, Radharani's lips are roses and her lips smell of red damask. Stung by envy, I recall our violet night. Radha doesn't know that he bit my lips.

2

Winter turns close to its solstice. Short days, and long nights. I dream in cobalt, of a permanent spring, where yellow flowers wrap us like silk.

Tonight, I lie alone at the same spot. Missing you is permanence.

3

I, Lalita, am restless tonight...I saw a little pearl moon, but all day, there was no glimpse of you. A red sun all day, a mauve sky at dusk, stars that laughed at my loneliness...I counted each painful moment, plucking them off like rose petals. Once, I heard the strains of your flute, but they died

before I could reach you...I wrenched off my pearl earrings and threw them into the Yamuna.

Jagari Mukherjee: The winner of the Women Empowered Gifted Poet Award (2020), is the Founder and Chief Executive Editor of the literary journal, EKL Review, and the Editor-in-Chief of Narrow Road. She has authored six solo collections of poetry--two chapbooks and four full-length volumes. Her most recent publication is ***Woman and the Moon*** by Hawakal Publishers. She has won numerous prestigious awards, including the Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize for Book Review (2018); the Reuel International Prize For Poetry (2019); the Jury Prize at Friendswood Library's Ekphrastic Poetry Reading And Contest (2021); and also, The Bharat International Award for Literature 2022 for Short Story. Her book, ***The Elegant Nobody*** was published by Hawakal.

PAPER BIRD

First, I lost the head nod.
Then they laughed at my ‘only.’

So, I ask for water with a flap of my tongue.
Rolling my ‘r’s’ like a paper cigarette,

Standing on a sidewalk with a smile.
Splintered, bitterness oozing out of my pores.

My wings are just for show.
I have become an Origami swallow.

Jahnavi Gogoi: She is a poet and writer who lives in Ontario, Canada. She was born in Dinjan, in Dibrugarh district but grew up in Gauhati, Assam. Her work has been published in many journals across the world including The Wales Haiku Journal, Failed Haiku, Presence, The Hooghly Review and so on. She was nominated for the Touchstone Award and a Pushcart prize in the year 2024.

SCROLLING THROUGH PICTURES

scrolling through pictures

is a landmine of the heart

the further back

I go, the harder it gets

to find that

just-right picture

seeing all I've lost

among the many, many joys

loved ones gone too soon

parts of my life, over

and yet

every now and then, a gem appears

yesterday

I heard my beloved cat purr again

in the moment

I was whole, again

Jennifer Gurney: She lives in Colorado where she teaches, paints, writes and hikes. Her poetry has appeared internationally in a wide variety of journals. Two of her poems have won international contests and one was recently turned into a choral piece for a concert. Jennifer's first book of poetry ***My Eyes Adjusting*** has recently been published.

LYING AROUND

In our love nest
watching snow gather.
You say it’s not as
pretty as I am.

Unloosening my clothes
throwing them and everything
else from the bed. Warmer warmer
we want our time together.

When the moon is full
faces of frost cover
our window. We will
nestle asleep while storms
drift past the night.

Joan McNerney: She has been the recipient of three scholarships. She has recited her work at the National Arts Club, New York City, State University of New York, Oneonta, McNay Art Institute, San Antonio and the University of Houston, Texas, published worldwide in over thirty-five countries, her work has appeared in literary publications too numerous to mention. Four Best of the Net nominations have been awarded to her. ***The Muse in Miniature; Love Poems for Michael;*** and ***At Work*** are available on Amazon.com. A new release entitled ***Light & Shadow*** explores the recent historic COVID pandemic.

THE TOUCH SCREEN

doesn't touch me back as I touch the notification At least 5 dead, 15 injured...

Our village is not far from the Teesta river

its voice is a silver melancholy or an indistinct laughter of God among the grinning conifer

I scroll down the deep gorge 150 ft, the bus plunged into…at 3 pm my mother dries her long hair and her red lentil wafers in the cool sun, the orange peels she fills her pregnant goat with.

A mustard oil ADVERTISEMENT blocks my shock. The actor holding a spoon in front of her mouth, the hot vadas eager to touch her PURE TASTE, RICH AROMA, COLD PRESSED; going further down Police confirmed one woman among the deceased

Up to 65% off on Baby care pops to shop now above the number of deaths likely to increase; someone comments below if it's a type of jihad; going further down YOU MAY ALSO LIKE 11 dead, 34 injured as a bus...

further down as I touch and scroll, it doesn't touch me back.

Kakoli Ghosh (a.k.a Moon Drops): She is a post-graduate in English literature, and hails from an industrial town in West Bengal, India. Her published books are ***Unfinished*** (2010), ***The Bridge*** and ***Estuary*** (2022). Her oeuvres have been published in Paradise on Earth: Vols. 1 & II (USA), Ferring Love (India), GloMag (India), Poems for Haiti (South Africa), The Poet magazine, (UK), The New Norm (India), Stories from India (Ukiyoto), etc. Many of her Bengali poems have been published online and printed in local magazines.

THE CARAVAN

When I was little, I pretended I was a gypsy,

That roamed the woods and lived in a Caravan…

But in the pretending I forgot I was pretending…

And it was for real…

My Caravan took to paths I never realized I knew,

Long before 'Voice commands' on Google came,

I was commanding where I wanted to go…

Charted out by a positioning system, run by FI (fairy intelligence)…

And Lo! My Caravan traveled the world over…

Valley and hill, field and forest…

And then it became a ship of the sea,

Traversing waves with ease

And then rose into the sky,

Like a chariot riding the winds...

Until it straightened itself into a magic carpet,

Much like Aladdin's…

And landed flat on my bedroom floor…

And my mother yelled out that I was spoiling it...

And I rushed to bed,

To find my beloved Caravan waiting,

Within the confines of the covers,

That I had pulled over my head!

Kamar Sultana Sheik: She is a poet, writing mostly on themes of spirituality, mysticism, and Nature with a focus on Sufi Poetry. Her professional career spanning 18 years has been in various organizations and institutions, including the IT sector. She is a self-styled life coach and has currently taken a break to focus on her writing full-time. Sultana has contributed to various anthologies and won several prizes in poetry contests. A green enthusiast, blogger and content writer, Sultana calls herself a wordsmith.

LIKE A CHILD

To love rain

like a child

we must not let

wonder die within us

To let rain

fall on you

we must give up

our umbrella of paranoia

To drink rain

like a child

we must thirst

for knowledge

To hold hand

like a child

we must love

without purpose

To seek experience

like a child

we must go past

our pretenses

To retain as an adult

child-like curiosity and openness

we must escape from the prison

of our faith and traditions,

prejudices and indoctrination

Kerala Varma: He hails from Chirakkal (Kannur), Kerala, is a former Deputy General Manager of State Bank of India and lives in Chennai with his wife Chitra. He is an amateur writer, who believes in “simple living, simple thinking”, welcoming enrichers of life like love, humour, long walk, the river, sea, mountain, books, music and Internet and avoiding complicaters of life like greed, anger, ambition, sentimentalism, sexism, god, rituals, religion and superstitions.

INVISIBLE LINKS

In the transition of years, love, truth and trust,

rise like new dawns, year after consecutive year…

not rainbows or fireworks that appear and disappear…

fleetingly visible, in sudden splashes and sparks…

constant testimonies of smiles in dark places,

brightening, reassuring, comforting the heart.

The always there, presence

like the sharing of hot morning tea in bed…

amidst pillows and crumpled sheets.

the greenery of flowers on windowsills,

the familiar songs of happy birds…

the dance of swaying coconut trees,

the same sound of temple bells… our blessings,

shared books in comfortable disarray,

cupboards ajar… with our clothes spaced

the invisible links to our together years

canvas art of yesteryears…

echoes unheard but felt,

love is the richness…

the whole experience that lasts…

new beginnings to steadiness of…

antique memories.

Ketaki Mazumdar: She is a poet who writes prolifically, passionately and joyfully. For her book ***Woodsmoke and Embers*** she has been listed amongst the 'Top 50 Most Influential Authors of 2021'. She was honoured as 'Poet of the Year 2022', by Ukiyoto Publishing. She was awarded 'The Creative Author' by Maharishi Vedvyas International Award for Books, by Poiesisonline. She is the recipient of the prestigious Emily Dickinson Award for her just released book ***Toasted Orange Embers*** as well as the Sahitya Sparsh Award and the Ukiyoto Best Poet Award. Her poems have immense depth and soul. An educationist and a National Awardee, she has also authored many delightful children's books.

it would be lie

if i said it’s easy to say goodbye

because i don’t want to

and i think i’ll ever do

i became a dad

when you were born

so to me

you are not gone

you might not be with us in the flesh

but in our hearts you’ll live on forever

we’ll never forget you

no never

we thank God for 25 years of life

and no it’s not the end

a new life has started with his Creator

and to Him is where he went

you are forever loved as a son, brother,

grandson, father, uncle, cousin, friend

heaven is now your home

you are not walking anymore on land

we choose to forgive, to live and let live

prayerfully stay on our knees

and forward, onwards and upwards

in peace

Leroy Ralph Abrahams: I'm an only child. I never knew my biological father. I reside in South Africa, Port Elizabeth, Helenvale. I'm married to Eileen and we have two boys and one girl. I'm a published author of 4 poetry books. It's personal testimonies and outreach. I started an outreach program with Chantal Sam Moodaley in 2020 and we decided to name it, 'Meet The Need'. We serve the community every Saturday morning.

AFTER THE FIRE

Do not contain me indefinitely
inside some constraining urn,
no matter how gleaming
the shine of metal,
nor how pretty
the ceramic coating.

Release me into the wilds,
let me wander and roam.
Let me sink into the waves
of majestic waters.
Throw me into the winds,
to glide along like some angel,
as I race excitedly
toward my newly discovered form.

Linda Imbler: Her poetry collections include ten published paperbacks: ***Big Questions, Little Sleep*** First Edition ***Big Questions, Little Sleep*** Second Edition; ***Lost and Found; Red Is The Sunrise; Bus Lights; Travel Sight; Spica's Frequency; Doubt and Truth; A Mad Dance; Twelvemonth;*** and ***Viewpoints While In Rome.*** Soma Publishing has published her four e-book collections, ***The Sea's Secret Song***; ***Pairings***; ***That Fifth Element***; and ***Per Quindecim***. Examples of Linda's poetry and a listing of publications can be found at ***lindaspoetryblog.blogspot.com***

FEELINGS

1.

The soft pulse bleeds,

The sigh bleeps,

The vacuum inside the cells hurt,

A tingling bell still sings,

The symphony of probable rainfall.

2.

The drizzle wets the earth,

Dry meadow is elated to hear,

The music of the rain

Gripping and fascinating like the former period,

Yet the calendar changed the year.

3.

Days passed followed by months,

The waiting intensifies

With the vibrant colour,

The melancholy song brightens with the hope,

One day cuckoo will return.

4.

The waterfall in the terrain,

Looks soothing,

Difficult and dangerous to reach the point of origin,

The flow is gushing,

Lovers enjoying the charm, without thinking.

Lopamudra Mishra: She is a contemporary poet, author, translator and editor and hails from Bhubaneswar, Odisha. Her writings are intended to touch the inner chord softly by emphasizing the 'Sense and Sensibility' of attachment and bonding. Six of her books have been published: ***Rhyme of Rain; First Rain; Tingling Parables; Rivulet of Emotions;*** and ***Red Tulips***. Her sixth book ***Hurricane Heart under the Honeyed Sky*** is on the way. Her poems have been published in various magazines and anthologies. She has been Editor of Radical Rhythm-4 & Co-editor of Radical Rhythm Series and Durga. She is an alumnus of Sailabala Women's college and Ravenshaw University.

IF YOU WERE MINE

Darling, if you were mine

My eyes will always smile & shine

Darling, if you were mine

I am sure, I will float on cloud nine

Darling, if you were mine

I promise, you are the only one in my heart's shrine

Darling, if you were mine

I will prove my love to be selfless & divine

Darling, if you were mine

Even a proposal from a king I will decline

Darling, if you were mine

In your love, I will forever entwine

Darling, if you were mine

My supreme love for you, lovers will measure &

define

Darling, if you were mine

Only you are going to be my Valentine 💕

Lubna Ahmed: She is an Author, Writer, Editor & Educator. She has written several articles, blogs, poems and short stories in online Magazines, E-books, and more than 25 National, 12 International published Anthologies under her pen name 'Princess Lubna'. She resides in Delhi-NCR with her family. She is a Certified Master NLP (Neurological Linguistic Programming) Practitioner and Workshop Facilitator, Certified Advanced Life Coach, and conducts SuperKoolKids Art Therapy workshops. Lubna graduated with first class marks in Science (Zoology Honors) from AMU Aligarh Muslim University. She holds a diploma in Travel & Tourism and Export Management.

INVENTING

Life extracts the price

for the moments of happiness

A heap of pain grips my soul

The soul sings in a withering tone to bare the wound

The clock is ticking away

Time moves with blinking stars and half-moon

When will you realize the atonement?

The gaudiest opulence!

A transient hope lights up a moonless night

catalysing the woes of

a fragile peace

I perceive a spring of forgotten dreams

I cannot abandon those between you and my predicament

I want to invent a new me

M Vijayaraghavan: He is a retired senior executive of a multinational pharma company. He lives in Parli, Kerala (India) with his family. He is a multilingual poet and has to his credit an anthology of poems in Malayalam titled ***Vaku*** (Word). His poems can be read in various Malayalam and international magazines/anthologies.

LOST LUSTER!

She whispers secrets to the wall

That houses the mirror that recite her fall

There she transformed from a maiden into a hag!

From a queenly beauty to a scarecrow in rags

Searching for the lady of yore

To her shock she discovers in store

A skeleton face glaring back

Ghastly, scary, her charm smacked!

The clock does tick; Seasons mimic!

Years do rush; Noises hush!

The old die; Newborns cry!

Yet the love for life in each survives!

Hence a glamour of yore,

Scrounged for beauty and more!

In an attempt to revive the lost glory

Delved deep to discover newer stories.

Alas, a garland of roses red

Failed to undo the truth that bled!

The face had all its charm shed;

Seldom has Time the same path tread!

Madhu Gangopadhyay: She is an MA in English Literature and has been in the education industry for more than two decades She has her poems and short stories published in several international anthologies, webzines and e-zines and her poems have been translated into Spanish, Albanian, Turkish and Persian.

http://madmusingspoetry.com/home

https://www.facebook.com/madhu.gangopadhyay.5

Sometimes you just miss being in the embrace

of the one

Who cajoles your senses like none

Reassuring your heart with a subtleness

Softly caressing

Your withered soul

With its fragrant touch of concern and care

Afflicting sorrow and lending a fresh lease of life...

Devoid of any malignancy

Touching deep down

The divinity and the peaceful murals etched on the walls of the heart

Seep in silently

The feeling of being loved and deeply cared...!

Madhu Jaiswal: She is an editor, translator and bilingual poet from the City of Joy Kolkata. She believes that penning your thoughts is therapeutic to the soul. Her musings are often featured in various ezines and have been published in multiple anthologies. An empathic person by core, she tries to impart affinity and kindness to all.

UP THERE…

I see a beautiful river,

A shimmering river

Up there in the sky,

The sands play,

Rising up and down,

Creating waves,

Waves that glitter

And shine

And reflect

In the mirror of my heart,

I lay in the sand,

Glowing,

Shining

Somewhere there,

Mercurial feelings swim across,

The Universe dances,

Alongwith

Sings, my wet voice…

Madhumita Bhattacharjee Nayyar: She is a bilingual writer (writing both in Hindi and English). A poetess, blogger, life-skills counsellor, healer, she is also a social commentator and works with women and children. She is the author of ***The Night Jasmine And Other Love Poems***. She is the winner of Icon Of The Year-Lifeskills Counsellor 2015-2016, and Indian Women Achievers Award 2016 for Creative Writing.

A POEM

Do you remember,

when,

in the wee hours of morning,

you wafted down the stairs,

like a lyrical tune,

and in your haste

to walk up to me,

to greet me at the door,

you knocked over everything

that my eyes held?

It is midnight now,

I am still groping for that everything

that lay in the dazzling dark,

in pieces,

on the concrete floor.

Prof. Majrooh Rashid: He was former Director Habba Khatoon Centre for Kashmiri Language and Literature, IUST, and twice Head of Department of Kashmiri. He was Assistant Professor, later elevated to Associate Professor, then Professor in Central Asian Studies of University of Kashmir. Besides, two monographs and several literary articles, he has two books, one in English and one in Kashmiri, to his credit. His articles/translations have been translated/published in Samkaleen Bharti Sahitya and Indian Literature of Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi and Medieval Indian Literature and Modern Kashmiri Poetry Mehjoor and after, both Sahitya Academy, New Delhi publications. His English translations have been included in the masterpieces of Medieval Indian Literature.

SOUL

The soul is a whisper, soft and deep,

A timeless echo, where secrets sleep.

It dances with light, it sings with the stars,

A journey within, that heals all scars.

It’s the breath of the wind, the pulse of the sea,

A quiet reminder of who we can be.

In silence, it speaks, in stillness, it grows,

The soul is the light that eternally glows.

Mehak Varun LL.B: Writer, poet, an artist, Mehak Varun, is the author of four books - ***THE Humane Quest vol 1, 2 & 3*** and ***I am Me***. She has been bestowed with '100 Inspiring Authors of India' award in Kolkata. She has also been honoured with the 'Women Of Influence 2019' award presented on women's day in New Delhi. Along with her books, her work has been published in various anthologies, and she is the recipient of various other prizes in poetry competitions as well. She has also been certified with a course on persuasive writing and public speaking from Harvard.

mehakgrover@amartex.com

IN MY WILL

In my will, there will be a pinball machine.
A renovated jukebox from American Pickers,
a cable TV show. For the taverns, bars,
and basements of fun seekers for those
who long to be free and ferocious.
I no longer fear death.
Empty vodka bottle by my bed.
A dusty Bible underlined
Jesus' messages
in red.

Michael Lee Johnson: He is a poet of high acclaim, with his work published in 46 countries or republics. He is also a song lyricist with several published poetry books. His talent has been recognized with 7 Pushcart Prize nominations and 7 Best of the Net nominations. He has over 653 published poems. His 330-plus YouTube poetry videos are a testament to his skill and dedication. He is a proud member of the Illinois State Poetry Society. His poems have been translated into several foreign languages. Awards/Contests: International Award of Excellence "Citta' Del Galateo-Antonio De Ferrariis" XI Edition 2024 Milan, Italy-Poetry. Poem, Michael Lee Johnson, “If I Were Young Again.”

I don’t love you like the moon

Or like the musical rain showers

I don’t love you like the snowy mountains

Or the lush green and blooming flowers.

I don’t love you like the jolly laughter

Or the tears in the starving eyes

I don’t love you like the blushed cheeks

Or the heartbroken goodbyes.

What I love you like has different names

And changes in different times

I love you like all my feelings good or bad

That I want to share with you for a lifetime.

Nazia Islam: I am currently residing in London, United Kingdom, working as an Early Years Practitioner. My dream is to make a difference in the world by shaping the minds of the future generation. I write out of passion and sometimes, out of whim. I love nature, books, simplicity, and the sound of rain.

MY BOSOM…!

It is where dreams cuddle in my warmth,

And wrap themselves into every breath

beneath the rhythmic couple of breasts,

They roll down the meadows of my bosom,

to deprive themselves of loneliness…!

A moment of happiness and hope…!

It is my bosom where fear gets subdued,

within the most guarded cage

Not to be fooled by its softness

but it lullabies the doubts and calm my lungs,

bears the pain of hiding all deadly emotions

within its tempting appearance…!

My bosom is not just a mound of flesh

but the soulmate to my beloved

when one is in distress

sheltering all tears of life

My bosom blooms in its pride…!

It tempts me to adore myself,

building the castle of confidence,

Where pain gets little space to confide

What more I can wish for

My bosom is the beauty of my existence…!

Nitusmita Saikia: Since the last 19 years, she has been working professionally as an instructor in National Cadet Corps. She is a trilingual writer from the state of Assam, India. Apart from poetry, she writes short stories, plays, quotes and articles in English, Assamese (mother tongue) and Hindi. She uses ‘nsaiko’ as her pen name for poetry and quote writing. She has been writing recently for magazine like FM (US), GloMag (India), Poetry Today (India, Kolkata), Tuck magazine (US), Innsaei (India), Matruakshar Journal and Sandhan (India), Barnil Assamese Magazine (India), and Sipoy. She is also a regular writer for newspapers like Adhunik Assam and Ganavarta from Assam.

WINTER SOLSTICE

Dusk gives way to night

that breaks to dawn at long last

Solstice crescendo.

Icicles hang like baubles on the tree and

clumps of snow form a festive garland.

The melody of nature's playlist waltzes across the frozen lake

this long winter night.

But

All too soon,

the moon then touches the sun,

tentatively, under the glimmer of a million stars.

Then, the sun turns around to greet the day,

as the earth and sky merge to one

reddish-pink ombre palette.

Darkest and longest though

this night of the year may be,

it still sees a new day

coming out of the shadows.

Nivedita Karthik: She is a graduate in Immunology from the University of Oxford. She is an accomplished Bharatanatyam dancer and published poet. Her poetry has appeared in GloMag, The Poet anthologies, The Ekphrastic Review, Visual Verse, The Society of Classical Poets, The Epoch Times, The Bamboo Hut, Eskimopie, The Sequoyah Cherokee River Journal, and Trouvaille Review. Her microfiction has been published by The Potato Soup Literary Journal. She also regularly contributes to poetry open mics. She currently resides in Gurgaon, India, and works as a senior associate editor. She has published two poetry books ***She: The reality of womanhood*** and ***The many moods of water****,* available on Amazon.

VALENTINE'S DAY

As the sun sets

And the stars twinkle

On the cerulean canopy

I sink into your arms

To hide from the mundane

Till the next dawn

Dream of being your muse

To love, to kiss, to peruse

Drown deep into the optic sea

A pearl hiding in the oyster of your love

We are only pulse felt in each other's hearts

Exploring each other's universe

Inhaling the breath that you exhale

The warm breath that whispers my name

Touches that caress the soul

Kindle fire sans control

Feeling the gush in our veins

Slipping in the piquant sweat

Melting in your arms as we lay spent

Our heartbeats are in sync

And herein melt the patches of discord

As we sign a passionate accord!

Nivedita Roy: Recipient of the Reuel International Runner-up 2023 for poetry, Nivedita Roy is a teacher by profession. She is the author of 4 poetry books, 1 short story and 1 collection of essays. She has co-authored 36/37 international anthologies till now. Her poems/articles are published in many newspapers and sites in various global magazines and newspapers. She hosts literary shows for various platforms. She is a Lucknowite who resides in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

FRAGMENTS OF ME

The mirror stands, solid in the corner

A witness to the years gone

From girl to woman, every stage,

It's seen my heart, it's turned every page.

In childhood dreams, I'd stand and stare,

At wide-eyed dreams, at tangled hair.

Through teenage storms, the mirror knew,

The doubts I fought, the truths I knew

And now, as years slip soft and slow,

It sees the woman I've come to know.

The quiet strength beneath my gaze,

The fire that still lights up my days.

It's known my hopes, known my tears,

The passing seasons, shifting years.

Each scar and line, a story told,

A life, a journey, brave and bold.

The glass reflects, but holds no blame,

Only the years, the love, the flame.

It’s seen me change, and yet, it stays,

A constant through life’s winding maze.

Padmini Rambhatla: Padmini finds joy in reading stories and exploring the written word, a lifelong passion that now harmonizes beautifully with her newfound hobbies of gardening and going on long walks with her loyal dog. Immersing herself in books and creative writing has always been her sanctuary but tending to plants and strolling through nature have introduced a serene rhythm to her day. Her love of language and the natural world fuels her creativity and enriches her ever-curious spirit.

And lo, there is a person to love
A bounteous heart with much to give,
Laughter in the eyes and joy in lips
Wisdom of an Oracle, and sense of kinship

Alas, you are wired for tough love,
For rejection, abandonment, shame...
Your being is repelled by the very thought
Of being in a relationship leading to bliss

And this invitation to joy is unfathomable,
Baffling and the person proposing is a joke
Their words stupid, gait and joy of madness
You turn down joyous love in unawareness

You dress up and go out, set your heart
Like a radar for the love you are used to.
Passion triggers yet again in crazy frenzy
Your heart beats to that grisly familiarity

You swoon to that man or woman
Edgy, dismissive, unimpressed, poor listener
Like a puppy you yelp, jump to be chosen
Because you are unused to feeling loved

Whereas love that could make you happy
Just happened to pass by.

Panjami Anand: She is a systematic therapist, soul plan reader and numerologist from Mumbai. She loves words and the Power of expression. Poetry to her is therapy and the song of life.

I DREAM OF AN ARROW

A poem in the form called AndAdi –(Hindi -Anth + Adi) where a form/variation/root of the ending word of the first line becomes the first word of the next line.

An arrow I dream of. Does it imply bad in spiritual realm?
Realm of enemies waiting to pour on me allegations?
Allegations are rootless plants, they are in a riotous parade
Parade cruises inside me like arrows let loose from bows.

Bows are blind, influenced by some invisible hands,
Invisible hands that pull the string won't see beyond,
Beyond the projectile of the arrowhead.
Arrowhead is not wary where it strikes or why it hurt.

Hurt can't be straightened with its thin shaft, never.
Never can the shaft stabilize the hurt, once shot, can't recall
Recalling is an impulsive act, truly hard for imposters.
Imposters lack sense of direction like Sagittarius.

Sagittarius doesn't look back; or are they some evil monitoring spirits?
Spirits of evil aim to arrest my destiny? Oh Lord, keep me under your fold.

Pankajam Kottarath: She is a bilingual poet and novelist and an author of more than 40 books. Her poems, book reviews, short stories and articles have been published in many national/international journals and anthologies. One of her poetry collections has been translated into French. Three books on literary criticism discuss her works in detail. A book of critical essays and research papers on her poems has also been published. She is the recipient of many awards.

IN SEARCH OF LOVE

In search of love I went out in the world.

I went to the mountains and I went to the sea.

I searched and searched but in vain.

Suddenly the first drops of love fell as rain.

In search of love I went out in the world.

I went to the valleys and I went to the fields.

I searched and searched but nowhere was love found.

The birds chirped and I found love in the morning sound.

In search of love I went out in the world.

I was conned and hurt at every step.

When I thought there was no love left and all are lies.

Suddenly I realised that I have always found love in my loved one's eyes.

Dr. Paramita Mukherjee Mullick: I live in Mumbai, India. I am a scientist, a literary curator and an award-winning poet. I have published eleven books, and my poems have been translated into 45 languages. In July 2024, I was one of the recipients of the Mumbai Woman Leadership Award 2024, and in June, I was one among six women around India to receive an award themed, “Women: Breaking barriers, Leading futures, Shaping change”. Through my poems, I also try to make people aware about conservation and climate change. I love painting and photography. I head two literary and performance forums in Mumbai, India.

HAUNTED

Wall-traveller, floaters-eye, familiar-unfamiliar, mist-mover, ground-clouder, whisper-treader, scream-smotherer,

gloved-silencer, veins-curler, veins-cruncher, skinny-clawerer, shroud-stainer, slime-darkener, eyesocket-

hollower, skin-bleeder, bone-hollower, never-there-er, mouth-packer, human-wreckager, eye-cornerer, shroud-tatterer,

eye-yellower, eye-spearer, bone-tatterer, blood-crisper, throat-stopper, body-potholer, lung-flooder, body-nester,

tooth-sharpener, cuticle-puller, skin-scrawler, skull-opener, finger-breaker, quiet as a skin-burrower, sharp as a

tongue-biter, strong as a cloud-beast, patient as a water-whisperer, cruel as an unwanted blood-snatcher, ceiling-climber.

Paul Brookes: He is a shop asst. His chapbooks include ***Wolf Eye*** (Red Ceilings Press, 2023); ***Wolf Eye Territory*** (ImpSpired, 2024); ***Ever Striding Edge*** (Dark Winter Press, 2024); and ***The Dude Work*** (Sherwood Handcrafted Press, 2024). He edits The Wombwell Rainbow interviews and challenges and a substack webzine, The Starbeck Orion.

https://thewombwellrainbow.wordpress.com

https://substack.com/The%20Starbeck%20Orion%7CSubstack

BLANK SPACES

What's it like to dwell in empty, blank spaces?

Trying to retrieve forgotten versions of yourself,

Within the numb shroud of monotony?

Tracing the trails of lost words,

Faded voices and cloaks that you left behind?

Is it this commonplace -

Or does it get any better?

Prabha Prakash: Prabha Prakash is a poet based in Kerala, a Chartered Accountant who likes to describe herself as an auditor who loves words more than numbers. Her first poetry collection ***Lost Monsoon*** was published by Writers Workshop, Kolkata in 2018. She is the recipient of Reuel International Poetry Prize 2019.

Echoes of nightmares

Finally shushed themselves,

Amongst all males and their inappropriate tactility,

One was touched by a man,

Sanctifying all the filths that was stored there,

And what would one do if not give in to the consecration of this sacredness

What are morals

What is chastity?

We'll debate about it later,

Right now allow to bury

those terrifying echoes,

Celebrate their departure

Ahh for this time it’s a man amongst all males,

And it’s “the healing touch”

Oh, what fortune it is to experience a man’s touch!

To submit to a man!

Pragyan Anwesha Mishra: Just a girl trying to weave the ordinary, the mundane into something, somewhat aesthetic.

DEAR LIFE

Standing before the mirror

watching one's own face daily

dyeing hairs and spraying deodorant over the body,

I die a bit daily.

Gone are those days of greenish leaves

gone are those days of youthful winds that sung for me once the song of the tornado.

Now it is time to bid farewell dear life,

no more spring,

love is death, a greater death is life

a process of slow poisoning.

May I ask you my beloved to return all my belongings,

the kiss in your seductive lips and the smiles bestowed on you as offerings.

Poems are sacred words of hymn chanted for you many a times

won't ask you to return.

Believe me, I am a giver

I may bequeath you even the very world

I habituate without questioning

Dr. Prahallad Satpathy: Dr. Prahallad Kumar Satpathy, who hails from Odisha (India), is a bilingual poet writing both in Odia and English. He is a retired Associate Professor of Economics. To his credit, he has four published anthologies in Odia language. His poems are published in many national and international journals. Twice he has represented Odisha Sahitya Academy as an honorary member.

THE MENTOR'S SON

In life's game of sixty-four squares, sometimes the diminutive foot soldier saves the day. Time and again choices have to be made, between the material and the spiritual! Only we need to recognise and focus on what is really required of us when faced with choices between right and wrong! The CEO's trusted right-hand man guided the Company through turbulent times, keeping the flock together, promising them hefty raises in their salaries, when the recession receded, post-Covid. In the meanwhile, the CEO died, and his son by blood, took over. He could not manage the Company as deftly as the Mentor's son; yet he ignored his suggestions and directives. Things came to such a sorry state that the Mentor's son and staff resigned enmasse, threatening the existence of the Company. The shareholders, the Board of Directors and the Court decreed that the Mentor's son was the true heir of the Company and fit the bill of the CEO. The former CEO's son was ousted in no time because he had not cared about his father's principles and work values, only eyeing his wealth and position in society. He lost everything due to his inadequacies. He rues that it is now too late to make amends…

Pratima Apte: She is a poet residing in Pune, India. She is a homemaker and a grandmother! She used to write sporadically in the Pune edition's Women's page of the Indian Express. She loves reading and writing, and words are her world.

NAMES UNWRITTEN

I've been to Yad Vashem virtually.

It is a name and a monument.

To those the Nazis killed.

Names and pictures on its walls.

In fading sepia tones.

It needs some more names.

Muhammad Ahmed Salem Al-Qanou, died a baby.

A bomb that came without warning.

Sama Ibrahim Majid Al-Wadiya.

I don't know how.

A bullet maybe.

Most likely starvation.

Uday Muhammad Rafiq Al-Sultan.

Rotted in his ventilator, I am told.

I don't know.

In the fog of war, no one does.

Zeina Ahmed Mohamed Shatat.

They say these children die quickly.

Without suffering.

One every fifteen minutes.

These are four names.

There are sixteen thousand to be written.

My hand tires.

But Yad Vashem has the staff.

And the money.

And the space.

I’m sure they will write them all down.

With a colour picture to go.

Raamesh Gowri Raghavan: He moonlights as an award-winning copywriter by day and daylights as an award-wanting poet by night, and sandwiches archaeological research, peer counseling for suicide prevention, and learning languages in between. He formerly edited Narrow Road Literary Journal and his poems and haibun have been published in many Indian and international anthologies. He thinks he is funny, but his friends vehemently disagree. He can be found on instagram as @instahaiga.

THE HANGING LIGHTHOUSES

Streetlights hang on the lamp posts standing

In the middle of the roads;

They never feel weary

Of the load on their extended arms;

Rather, they feel happier than other times;

The fluorescent lights keep on burning

In the dark of night unblinking;

The canopy of white and pure light

Encompass the whole surroundings unabashedly;

Sometimes, it appears to me that

The moon has shifted herself in the splinter

Form into the cozy space of streetlights;

Probably, the shimmering light of roving stars

Has lost its sheen to some extent;

Everyone on earth is in constant search

For streetlights with lamp posts as mainstay,

To illuminate their lives on a treacherous

Path of life; but how do streetlights

Create such magic, only time can tell.

Rakesh Chandra: Mr Rakesh Chandra is a retired civil servant. He is currently pursuing his Ph.D in Law from Lucknow University. He has got two collections of poems titled ***Moon is Black*** and ***Circle of Life***. He also has one collection of Hindi poems. His English poems have found place in different poetry journals and newspapers' literary supplements. He has also authored two books on Law.

THE FLOATING ISLANDS

The mysterious, magnificent
floating islands of poetry
in the limitless ocean of life--
Miniature continents
in the midst of waves--
Create bridges between
the real and the imaginary:
New horizons, metaphors,
connections and transformations!

My soul has survived many shipwrecks
ending up on these islands!
The beauties far and near
have soothed and sustained my soul:
Warbling birds, delicate butterflies,

exotic plants and a stretch of

buoyant green masses!

Can’t say how long

these islands will survive!

Will they disperse by the shifting winds?

Or break up one day due to storm events?

Oh God, don’t let this happen!

Dr. Ranjana Sharan Sinha: She is a poet, author, academic and retired professor of English. Her poems have been included in Postgraduate University Syllabus and have been translated into Greek, German, Spanish, Russian, Persian Albanian, Chinese and other languages. She has received many awards and honours for her poetry that includes a commendation from the former President of India, A.P.J.Abdul Kalam. Her poems, short stories, articles and research papers have been published in highly acclaimed dailies, magazines, e-zines, archives and journals at national and international levels including Sahitya Akademi's journal Indian Literature. She has authored and published 9 books in different genres and 51 research papers.

WHERE DO BIRDS GO!

When winter walks in with whitewash of snow

Heaping flakes on trees all around the wood

Ever wonder where the singing birds go

Refusing to emigrate as they should!

Each little song that floated in the morn

Disappears as a long-forgotten tune

Over the weeks that bares the red rose's thorns

Birds seek bamboo thickets hiding from moon

In the dense undergrowth families live

Resting together to ward off the chill

Dark winter this little comfort does give

Stationing the birds on stems to gaps fill

Gatherings of robins and blue birds say

Only those nested together can stay!

Ranjit K. Sahu: He is a resident of Charlottesville, Virginia, USA, and is a poet, short story writer, visual artist and a freelance columnist. His languages of expression are mainly English and Odia with a few poems published in Hindi. His themes for poetry mostly include nature and human elements. His English literary pursuits include poems and an attempt to develop a new format of poetry combining the elements of sonnet and acrostic. He has a few books of poetry published in English, Odia and Hindi. He is interested in photography with some of his photographs displayed in local exhibitions.

BESEECHED

There’s ripple in clustered clouds

River trembles in sheltered ecstasy

Trees fan their way in tremulous fancy

Verdant woods frisson in their shrouds

Glorious clouds they are that in summer

Love to sail under sky and relish the simmer

Now ready to descend, ready to drown

As they ripen in age for a final crackdown...

Benumbed as clouds bescreen my wet eyes

Muted as river crowds my melting heart

I know these trees will be my silent escort

As I search for myself within this wooded beseech.

Ravi Ranganathan: He is a writer, critic and a poet from Chennai. He is also a retired banker. He has to his credit four books of poetry. He revels in writing his thought-provoking short poems called ***Myku***. He writes regularly for several anthologies. He has won many awards for his poetic works, the latest being Mahrishi Vedvyas International Award for creative poetry. He is a regular contributor to GloMag and to the monthly webzine 'Literary Vibes'. He is the Treasurer of Chennai Poets' Circle.

DYLAN THOMAS

A little girl

ran into the bar,

said she wrote a poem:

“I eat the wind,

I drink the rain!”

she held her hands out.

To a drunk Dylan Thomas

who said: “Well, I could have wrote that,

if I had to the time.”

Seeming jealous

of the little girl.

As though he were mad at her

for still being in

childhood.

The great poet

defeated.

Ryan Quinn Flanagan: He is a Canadian-born author residing in Elliot Lake, Ontario, Canada with his wife and many mounds of snow. His work can be found both in print and online in such places as: Evergreen Review, The New York Quarterly, GloMag, Setu, Red Fez, and The Oklahoma Review.

TRULY THE PART OF NATURE

Beyond the territory of noisy town

With the serene touch of green,

A little cottage is there

With peace and hope in

The serenity also prevails

In the blue sky above

And the trees beneath

Full of green leaves, colourful flowers…

A flair nearby with cool water

Lovely birds around the place

They twitter flying from branch to branch

And the night horizon with twinkling stars.

A good parity with nature lies

The cock welcomes dawn, making the house awake

The sun gets brighter and house busier as well

That continues till a little rest after the noon.

Some cloudy, rainy days bring relishing mood

Else, the sunset invites silence

That comes finally after supper

As in the silent sky begins the reign of moon.

Beyond the territory of crowdy town

With the serene touch of green

The cottage lies there

With the peace and hope in.

Saikat Gupta Majumdar: I am an amateur and bilingual poet. I reside in Kolkata. I work in a private organization in 'Accounts Division'. My hobby is writing poems, rhymes captions and short stories both in English and Bengali. My main focus is on English poems which have got published in various online magazines including the US-based bilingual magazine 'SETU' so far. I have obtained certificates from one of them also. Apart from online magazines, I have successfully contributed to 'Indology,' the Raigunj (W.B. India) based little magazine in Book form and to GloMag.

DROP

A single drop of rain

Falling from the clouds

Pattering on the roof

Trickling to the ground.

Will it patter to the ground

In a swirling flow,

Quenching the grass and trees

Making a splash?

Or will it join the deluge

Sweeping us away

A brown river meandering

On paths we walked along?

A single drop of rain

Elixir or deluge?

It’s nature’s call,

What it’ll end up being.

Samixa Bajaj: Samixa is a student of journalism and mass communication at Mount Carmel College, Bengaluru. In addition to writing, she also enjoys reading, dancing, and occasionally, sketching.

FINDING MYSELF

I watched once again, the sun rise in the creases of my palms

Gazing out of the now too familiar windows

And looking back I realised it had been months, over two years since

I've been wandering through the catacombs of time

Past, present, future, everything jumbled into one single moment - now

The inevitability of the present, the struggle for survival...

Tears coalesce at the edge of my Kohl lined lashes,

As I try hard to swallow the growing knot in my throat

It’s one of those days when I feel too much, I’ve tried too hard, for far too long

“But healing is messy, healing isn’t a straight, upward curve

And you need to give yourself time, some kindness too, a pat on the back”

A voice in my head whispers...

I don’t know, but somehow the storm seems to have been raging forever

And having receded into my quiet cocoon,

I’ve perhaps disappeared for the world out there

It’s scary, hard-hitting - how easily out of sight transforms into out of mind

But then it’s my journey, my timeline, I remind myself, wiping my misted eyes

And as I begin yet another day with a prayer of gratitude to the Infinite Universe

I know, this may feel like forever,

But, slowly, steadily, surely, I'm getting there

Through baby steps, faith, hope, belief...

Samrudhi Dash: She writes under the pseudonym 'Inara' and is a poet, author, editor and motivational speaker with a Master's in English literature from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. She has to her credit, five poetry collections and three novels; her third novel ***Letters From A Stranger - A Life Changing Map*** made it to the Amazon Bestsellers List at Rank 10 in 2020. She is a recipient of the Nissim International Best Upcoming Poet Prize, 2019, the WE Strong Feminine Voices Award, 2020, the WE Women of Letters, 2022 and the Nissim International Prize for Excellence in Writing, 2022. Her signature words are "Hope, Live, Believe".

LINGERING AFTERIMAGES

You narrate tales of mushrooms picked

as you roamed all day on a child's summer.

You see our home,

your smile and frown lines,

the streets that lead away from our familiars

the paths that curve into

the known.

You see.

I stir mushrooms into the pasta sauce

browns mingling

with the pristine cream

And I talk and you talk

and the bubbles we live in

drift closer

then away into the yawn of time

And I raise my eyes

to the deep ask of my heart...

the want, no, the need

For you to look up from our life

and see me.

First published in Spring Showers, India Poetry Circle Anthology 2024

Sangita Kalarickal: Her work appears in several journals and anthologies. Her chapbook ***Mamina*** showcases free-verse poetry and haikai form. A Pushcart and Touchstone Award nominee, she is the associate editor of Drifting Sands Haibun Journal and conducts the podcast Ripples in the Sand. Dr. Kalarickal lives in the midwest USA with her family and the fantasy characters she writes about.

Big and small tufts of clouds filched some orange hues from the westering sun,

looking not unlike slivers of orange.

The sun was slowly going home to rest,

but would burst again the next day, at its sparking best - bloated with promise, new dreams and a hopeful refrain .

Ah, the morning dawns.

The artist is at the colour palette, mixing and remixing colours! What focus! What concentration!

What passionate intensity on the blue immensity!

The sun rises with a bright new glow, cheered on by the flying and chirping birds, the rustling trees, and the fragrant breeze.

The butterflies flit around, gold on their fragile bodies, the green grasshoppers flaunt their golden look, proud of their new avatar.

Santosh Bakaya: Reuel International Awardee [Poetry, 2014+, Setu Award for 'stellar contribution to world literature' *2018+, Eunice Dsouza Award, 2023, *WE Literary Community], Santosh Bakaya, PhD, poet, essayist, novelist, biographer, Tedx speaker, has written twenty-four books across different genres. ***Ballad of Bapu*** [A poetic Biography of Mahatma Gandhi]; ***Only in Darkness can you see the Stars*** [Biography of Martin Luther King Jr] have been internationally acclaimed. ***What is the Meter of the Dictionary?*** is her latest solo book of poetry. Her TEDxTalk on The Myth of Writers' Block is popular in creative writing classes. She runs a column, Morning Meanderings in Learning and Creativity.com, part of which is now an e-book.

The joys and bounds of blossoming flowers

To bring the meadows and set them in a vase

Home fills with a scent of rajnigandhas

What a pleasure to see nature's bounty jars

Bees buzzing and birds humming

Butterflies zipping

And the sun shining

Everything in nature has a silver lining

Flowers will start giving way to fruit

Waiting children and monkeys for some loot

Now in the villages these occasional brutes

Miss those days when lazy afternoons were spent

chasing the coots

Now in a tall building

Who knows what is winter what is spring

When the flowers come and go

When it's time to snow

From a glass the top of another apartment

When did we last stay out, pitch a tent

All these will come and go, the seasonal change is the only constant.

Sara Bubber: Sara is a doctoral student creating an environmental curriculum through stories. She runs an Early childhood centre with focus on sensory development of toddlers. She is the editor of the children's section of Heartfulness Magazine and is a meditation trainer at Heartfulness Institute. She is a nature buddy and loves spending time with her dogs, in her garden, birding, wildlife photography and going on forest walks and safaris.

BURN, BABY, BURN

Lay me down in the luminal fire

use the same thorn twice in both palms

Lick the salt from cavern walls

and eat the echo humming in my heart

Revelations are born in moments

of great understanding

though first gestated

and bathed in the flames of sorrow

Not by wit alone

nor beauty

nor arcane knowledge

nor street smart common sense

but by collage

and amalgamation

The thin whisp

of imagination

back in the air

like calm before an inferno

Scott Thomas Outlar: He is originally from Atlanta, Georgia. He now lives and writes in Frederick, Maryland. His work has been nominated multiple times for both the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net. His essay ***Daydreaming Dystopia*** placed second in the 2023 Bellarmine Goes Gonzo Writing Contest. He guest-edited the Hope Anthology of Poetry from CultureCult Press as well as the 2019-2023 Western Voices editions of Setu Mag. Selections of his poetry have been translated and published in 15 languages. He has been a weekly contributor at Dissident Voice for the past nine years. More about Outlar's work can be found at 17Numa.com.

GETTING OLDER

As I count my seconds

and my hair changes color

I grow rich and mature

In thought and love

I start to respect elders

Abundant in experience

And in wisdom,

They know a lot.

Bigger problems look small.

More minor problems look big.

Falling up and getting down

It isn’t easy anymore.

A lot has changed.

Yet when you message me

I smile, and my life rejuvenates.

Dear friend, let’s stay in touch.

Shalini Samuel: She finds that writing is the purpose of her soul. She is a senior content Writer at KAI Marketing. Shalini is keen on writing business content, technical articles, and poetry. She has authored three poetry collections: ***Singing Soul; The Painted Life;*** and ***Drizzle***. Her name often appears in online and print poetry anthologies. She also writes technical articles for top online websites like Hubpages, Dzone, UXMatters, and The Runtime.

THOUGHT & THOUGHTLESSNESS

Does Life protect you,

or do you protect it? Does wine, or dream, or good literature,

or a sparkling touch of poetic highs

keep you sustained and safe

from tottering off the edge

of good old reality,

into an abyss that no ordinary soul welcomes, that hazy boundary where thought slips into thoughtlessness.

Shreekumar Varma: He is a poet, novelist and playwright living in Chennai with his wife Geeta. His translations, columns, articles and reviews have appeared in newspapers, magazines and anthologies. He won the R. K. Narayan Award and the Charles Wallace Fellowship. His children's book was short-listed for the Crossword Award; his novel long-listed for the Man Asian Literary Prize; his play won First Prize in the All India The Hindu-Madras Players Play-scripts Award. He has been teacher, editor, journalist, entrepreneur.

FIGHTING SLEEP

Tears filled up my eyes

My vision blurred

The world looked hazy

My room looked out of proportion

As if

I was seeing through my grandfather's glasses

I shook my head

Vigorously

Like a dog trying to

Dry itself

I tried again

But to no avail.

My mouth automatically opened big and wide

Blamed it on lack of air

But my eyes

Deceived me

As I tried to fight sleep,

I thought I succeeded

Till I woke up with a neck pain

As I had fallen asleep in my chair

Shreya Suraj: She is a gold medallist in Mathematics, teacher, artist, photographer, and volunteer. She is a Mathematics teacher by profession and an artist by passion. She is the Founder of an art group called ANYBODY CAN DRAW on Facebook. She is also a volunteer in various environmental organizations that organize beach clean-ups and has done more than 200 beach clean-ups in Qatar. She believes that each individual is unique and encourages every individual to do different types of art works using recyclable materials. Her principle in life is to do good to others unconditionally and without expectations. If your work is good, nature will definitely reward you.

UNAWARES

I was standing under the purple sky...

Which was slowly turning black.

The overhanging leaves touched by golden…

And the cool twilight laden with pink.

The merry chirping mingled with music of the wind...

And the trees slowly nodding off to sleep.

I was alone, but happy, with only...

The evening for company.

When someone lit a lamp on the horizon...

And I was caught unawares in the shroud of darkness!

Dr Shweta Sahai: I am a medical practitioner, working as a Professor of Medicine at the Government Medical College of Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh. I have been writing poetry since my school days. Poetry is my way of expressing my communion with nature. My poems have been published in various journals and anthologies, notable amongst them are GloMag, 'Anthology of women poets from India and South Africa', ILA magazine and 'The wise owl'.

LIFE HAS TAKEN WINGS

on the rooftops, in the old cupboards, amongst branches and barns--I sight the parental instinct of birds, building nests!

twigs, leaves, grassy strings,

roots and straws woven dextrously into those nests,

to lay eggs-

that pass well the all-time tests.

then, one fine day- some twittering, fluttering, chirping

and some crackling;

and the little chicks are

out of their eggs.

their open beaks; the morsel-feed--their peep, chirp and some tweet; some trot, hop, stop and then the walk on their feet--

soon they fly away after

learning the survival skills.

who knows where they have glided off to

in the breezy days of Springs,

their nests are left empty, as

Life has taken wings!

Sindhu Rana: I am a poet and writer residing in Jalandhar, Punjab (India). I have contributed to various leading newspapers and journals, e-zines and anthologies. I am a script writer and voice-over artist for documentaries. However, reading and writing remains my first love.

SOMETHING I LOOK AT-47

Nothing lures me, neither the beauty of the present, nor the glamour of the future. No present to live in, no future to look for, I am in my solitary asylum,

but not all alone.

You are with me, every minute every second. Your sweet memory never allows me to live alone, captivates and enthrals me and makes me feel

as if I am in love for the first time.

I am completely lost in you, always in your lap my sweetheart, recapitulating and brooding over the lovely moments we had

Mumtaj! I am in my cell, far away from the calculative world.

What better place could I have aspired for? No one near, no royal grandeur,

no diplomacy and warfare, it is only you, whom I see and feel, talk to, and fall in love as and when I want to.

Smruti Ranjan Mohanty: He is from Padmapur, Jagatsingpur, Odisha. He is a multilingual poet, essayist and writer whose write-ups are published in newspapers national and international magazines and anthologies. He has four collections of poems: ***Mana Upaban; Aroma of Wilting Petal; Something I Look At;*** and ***And After*** to his credit. His collection of poems and proses are published in his blogs under the heading A LOOK AT LIFE, SOMETHING I LOOK AT, A LOOK, THE RIVULET, THINK ONCE MORE, THE JOURNEY, AU THARE, AU EKA GAPA, SROTASWINI, JATRA, THE JOURNEY, etc. He has been consecutively awarded International Faith Poet of the year by Destiny Poet International Community of Poets, Wakefield, U.K.

THE VISITOR

Fragile bodies, weakened limbs, arms outstretched initiated and energized,

The shy greeting of the one-year-old - pacifier in mouth, peering from the sanctity of known arms,

Gazing in trepidation at the alien strangers, playing peek-a-boo at familiar but unknown and somewhat hazy visuals,

The beckoning hands, toothless and captivating smile, innocent eyes and guileless face, lightens up tired, weary eyes, warming the cockles of hardened hearts

Her “oohs” and “aahs” along with a questionable “hmmm” are like sounds of bells ringing - music to the ancient ears,

The sound of her musical play drum, the clatter of spoon with utensil brings a breath of fresh air to the otherwise soundless household.

Now the toys lying resplendent in the corner of the empty house - a constant reminder of the blessings received - of love restored,

Resonating the many benedictions of hearts full of gratitude.

My Didibhai - always a prayer that may she grace our presence once again, from distant lands, trying to forge forgotten friendship of recalcitrant children.

Didibhai - A term used affectionately for a close relative

Someeta Das: She is a retired professor from Maharaja Manindra Chandra College Kolkata with twenty-eight years of teaching experience. She loves making new friends and interacting with people from all walks of life. She loves writing poems, short stories and travelogues. She has published in GloMag, Women's Era, Setu, Muse India and a number of e-zines.

COFFEE

The magic potion that gets the day underway

The aroma of fresh decoction wafting away

Boiling milk turning the black fluid into the seductive brown mix

That gives the much-needed early morning fix

Bursting bubbles that tingle the nose as the cup inches closer to the lips

The warmth and the flavour permeating as one savours in little sips

That feeling when it trickles down the gullet

That feeling of being armed like a firearm with a bullet...

Sri N Srivatsa: Chennai-born Sri N Srivatsa is a retired banker living in Noida. His original poetry and translations mostly from Tamil to English and vice versa plus a handful to and from Hindi, have been featured on several journals and platforms. Thirteen volumes of Tamil poems by thirteen different poets and one volume of English poems translated by him into Tamil of yet another poet, plus a collection of his English translations titled ***Modern Tamil Poetry: A Miniature Canvas - Volume I*** with a poem each by 153 poets have been published so far.

A LETTER TO WISDOM

Dear Wisdom,

You cleared my blurred vision of life

Nurturing in me an insight

You led me towards divinity

Purging my soul, giving it sanctity

You pulled me from trivialities and the chaos

Lending shape to my being, turning it pure

My merry songs are no longer the same

You gave them meaning, adding the pain

Those ripples of excitement are replaced by the calm

For my vigour, my mischief no longer lark

My youth was the ignorant past

And I happily bartered it to meet you at last!

Yours lovingly

A human being

Staffy Bhateja (Pen Name: Steffi): She is an award-winning poet, editor and exhibited painter hailing from the City Beautiful. She is the Chapter Head of Chandigarh of The Asian Literary Society. As a writer, she has taken part in numerous anthologies under various publishing houses and has solely edited a book titled ***Catharsis*** under The Impish Lass Publishing House. Her poem on the Taj Mahal was awarded the Certificate of Excellence in the Asian Literary Society's Annual Wordsmith Awards Contest 2023 (Poetry Segment) and her poetry piece titled ***It Is Poetry!*** bagged the second position in the same contest in 2024.

MANGO TREE

Dancing around the Mango Tree in the Summer breeze. Waiting for my lover to show, with hugs and kisses that please.

Dancing like on a grass knoll.

Now resting eating

my Mango slices and sweet roll.

Stephen Goetz: He is a published poet from Lincoln City, Oregon, USA. He is Senior Street Performer who loves to dance. He is a published poet in online poetry groups. He has received poetry awards from Motivational Strips and other affiliate online groups. He is a regular contributor and has appeared in consecutive books put out by GLOMAG.

MY BODY

I have hanged my naked body in a closet

I have carefully wrapped polythene sheets all around

It hangs limply and slowly roasts

Heat has kept dust mites and mildew at bay.

There was a time when I had let it out in the open

Fresh in the pure air

How the people stared at it, some even ogled lasciviously

Persons in the know advised to clothe and cover it.

But the gaze didn't stop

They stared and gaped

Once my body dared to look back

It was punished for that and how!

My body ached,

My body rebelled,

My body reacted,

Then, my body understood.

Now my body droops

In the suffocating cloistered closet

A refuge not designed by it

It hangs in indifferent death.

Sudeshna Mukherjee: She has surprisingly survived in her mundane world without pangs of pain while labouring to birth her book-babies - ***Mélange*** the hotch potch and ***Meanderings of Mind***. She doesn't feel like tom-toming about herself when she can slurp on Tom Yam Soup. She mentions feeling 'Special' though and is particularly partial to a 'Golden Vase' as a reward for consistently serving Funny Side up. She sings through life splaying it with vivid colours. Plastering smiles is her speciality, often tongue firmly in her cheeky cheek. A chunk of her time is spent in spouting English to young adults who are lost to the beauty of the Language.

I GRIEVE

When one day bleeds into the next

like a mechanical robotic exercise

cold air wafts into life's clumsy and fetid space

fessing up no palpable respite

dark clouds hover over

iridescent hues of vast expanse like a curse

my bright day headily metamorphoses to a bleak night

How quickly things change

at time's behest!

that was balmy then and this is torrid of late

But why does this befall me all the time!

I am more or less clueless, believe me

the slither takes me away from seatherny

and I plummet like a doomed kite

My fine boned face framed by long flowing hair

seeks comforts in small wisps of air

to revel in sirimiri and nature`s misty clad oeuvre

croon a few aubade rhythms of jouissance

festooning my dawn in the susurrations of the beatific.

Sujata Dash: She is a poet from Bhubaneswar, Odisha. She is a retired banker. She has four published poetry anthologies (***More than Mere-a bunch of poems; Riot of hues; Eternal Rhythm;*** and ***Humming Serenades*** -all by Authorspress, New Delhi) to her credit. She is a singer, and an avid lover of nature. She regularly contributes to anthologies worldwide.

A MEMORABLE TRIP

Draped in verdure, the splendour

She welcomes onto her lap with glee

Terraced farming ascending

Short shrubs of Tea neatly cropped

Spreading aroma from the plantation

Houses nestled amidst the greenery

Workers pluck the tender leaves

Their daily task

Drizzle falls, like a sprinkler

Shrubs revel in the coolness

Eucalyptus scent freshen the air

Trees touching the sky.

Still waters reflect the trees

People boating, breaking the stillness

She has many hidden treasures to explore

Our ancestors perch on the treetops

Waiting to snatch things from visitors

Travelling by bus along with school children

Seated by the window

Away from all the worries

A sense of being trapped in trance

A memorable trip alive in heart.

Sulochana Narayanan: I am a multi-talented individual currently serving as a high school teacher in the government sector in Palakkad, Kerala. I have a great passion for painting, music, and Nature, and I also love to express my creativity through poetry writing. My first poetry collection called ***Imprints*** was published by Apple Books. Additionally, my poems have been included in various anthologies such as *Words Cannot Define Her; Known Yet Unknown; Melodious Musing of Love; Me and My Valentine; Goddess on the Earth*; and *Whole World in a Single Word*. I have received several certificates of appreciation for my poems. I am reachable at *sulsubra@gmail.com*

“ISN’T IT DANGEROUS?”

April allures, spring’s lethal abundance given so eagerly,

sneak peaks into my desires, dreams.

Hermit hibernation mends fragile feelings,

I adore Kintsugi-accept imperfections with love.

“Isn’t it dangerous?”

Warmth of happiness, the most dangerous blindness

opens new doors. I’d rather explore unknown terrains

than take a step back out of unfounded fears.

“Isn’t it dangerous?”

Prayer purifies. I rip the redundant, relax, recuperate,

sunsets and fragrance of roses, lilies, carnations etched in eyes.

Betrayal, war, calamities, limiting beliefs, I blatantly condemn.

“Isn’t it dangerous?”

I’m tired of all the lies around me. Afraid to open up,

to not hurt. There’s no limit to addiction, desires.

Constantly wondering-prayer and love can’t be dangerous.

Isn’t it dangerous?

Poetry, you sustain me, baptise me!

Purification opens new paths, let me close old doors.

It isn’t dangerous!

Dr Sunil Kaushal: She is a gynecologist, poet, author, translator, essayist, and editor. She has been translated into French, German, Greek, Punjabi, and Chinese. Her twice-awarded memoir ***Gypsy Wanderings & Random Reflections*** won the Nissim Non-Fiction Prose Award given by The Significant League, 2020 and The Golden Book Award by Wing’s Publication International, 2024. She is a winner of multiple awards, some of which are: Women Achiever’s Award 2019; Enchanting Muse & Fellow of the Regal World of Scribes; Featured in the Limca Book of Records; Featured in the Golden Book of Records; Gold medalist in dramatics; and Best Lioness President Asia award.

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE SIGNS

The fall arrives finally

Trudging in late

Like a lost traveller

In the village inn,

Leaving behind

Trails of leafless trees

And bare hedges.

Except few leaves

Here-there

That cling stubbornly

To the bald trees, like

The kids refusing to leave

Dead mothers!

Sunil Sharma: A humble word-worshipper: catcher of elusive sounds, meanings and images. Published 27 creative and critical books--- joint and solo. A winner of, among others, the **Panorama Golden Globe Award-2023**, and, **Nissim Award for Excellence-2022** for the novel ***Minotaur***. His poems were included in the prestigious UN project: *Happiness: The Delight-Tree: An Anthology of Contemporary International Poetry*, 2015. Editor of the monthly Setu journal (English)
https://www.setumag.com/p/setu-home.html
https://sunil-sharma.com

THE TREE OF EMPTINESS

The tree of emptiness spreads its branches - sharp twigs reaching out to touch the terrace of my house

poking like a bird pecking on wood with its sharp beak

till the bark gives way to the soft innards

ants bore holes biting their way inside

billowing leaves rustle

shaking their heads in unison

as pellets of jamun land on my head -

splashing their purple blood all over my face

Sunita Singh: Steeped in the Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb, Sunita Singh is a bi-lingual poet, author and storyteller based in Delhi. Her verses and stories are dipped in the ink of her heart and have been awarded and published in numerous Indian and International portals, anthologies, magazines, e-magazines. Her solo book of English poems was awarded the best debut collection, while the biography penned by her is being translated in Hindi. Sunita is an avid storyteller and has been involved in doing dramatized readings of stories in various schools, events and on digital portals.

JOURNEY OF NO RETURN

I will return some day

Without a care

Without rush or haste

And spend endless hours

Just as I had

Many many years ago…

I'll touch every page

Savor every word

Sway to every rhythm

Walk untrodden paths

Be friends with strangers

Greet the unfamiliar

Converse with the mundane

I will… for certain

Some day some time…

These are but unkept words

Broken promises

Across centuries of parting

And departures

Are journeys of no return…

Dr. Supatra Sen: She is currently Associate Professor in a reputed Kolkata college, is a veteran academician, teaching and researching in the fields of Botany and Environment. Her 125 odd publications as international books, papers and reviews are chiefly in her parent subject. She has edited several UGC funded ISBN volumes and is also the founder and Chief Editor of an ISSN peer-reviewed multi-disciplinary academic journal 'Harvest' www.harvestjournal.net since 2016. Despite two National Awards in Literature earlier, her serious tryst with poetry writing began in 2020 during the global pandemic. Her poetry anthology ***My Autumn Sonata*** was published in October 2021 and ***Sojourns in Autumn*** in early 2024.

HOMECOMING

She enters, not with reticent and timorous steps,

but with the affliction of a thousand silenced voices, strained into her spine.

Her hands, worn by time,

carry the ache and discomfort of stories untold,

each line a map of resistance and forbearance,

each scar, a testament to survival and existence.

She remembers—*not out of bitterness, but because forgetting is a betrayal,*

The burnt leaves, the clipped wings, the stolen names—

They murmur below her skin.

She articulates, not to fill the space, but to assert the room denied.

Her words, sharp, intense and tender, cut through the uproar of dismissal,

amassing strength from the frayed threads of her hurt and agony.

She does not demand the world bend,

but it does—slowly, hesitantly, under the drive of her becoming.

They call her too daring, too loud and too much.

She lets their words fall away,

like dead leaves from a tree that refuses to stop growing.

Her roots nudge deep into the earth, her twigs stretch toward the sun.

She blooms—not for their gaze, but because she must,

like tributaries and offshoots congregated after falling apart.

This is not a fight; it is a homecoming—

to herself, to the women who were, and to the women who will be.

Dr. Sushmindarieet Kaur: She is an Associate Professor of English at G.G.N. Khalsa College, Ludhiana, Punjab. M.Phil in Anthropological Linguistics and Ph.D. in Indian English Literature, she has recently brought out collections of poetry under the titles ***Voices From Within*** and ***The Tapestry of Heartstrings***. Besides editing ten books, she translated Sikh Soldiers in Italy: Second World War. She has been anthologized in various journals and books. She is the Associate Editor of UGC Care-listed, Peer Reviewed Journal LITERARY VOICE, Editor of the poetry section of INNSAEI, editor of the Punjabi section of "MatruAkshar" and Deputy Chief Editor of LITERARY JOURNAL of AESTHETICS.

TWILIGHT FREEZE

thoughts run through... every corner of my mind

yet no words can be found... what comes forth and behind

concede to understand... not by the fullness of sight

but through the darkness... in a skyline of twilight bright

abound to nowhere...when limits are free

my space in phase of time... i touch and see

i soar with my dreams... reaching the skies

allow the clouds mellow... with whispering sighs

i hear your voice... from the passing breeze

wrapping my soul... within the twilight freeze

looking upon the dusk... to meet the dawning

verging now with forever... to keep on dreaming

my heart draws me far... to where i will dwell

to this world i created... never will bade farewell

i live and exist... let my mind meet my soul

believing dreams, and to myself...my being whole

Suzette Portes San Jose: She was born and raised in Cebu City, Philippines. She is a University half scholar, born with a passion for writing and living in her art forms. She now has joined 25 book anthologies. Each of her poems is written with her painting as visuals and is now appearing internationally. She has also received multiple awards for her Artwork and Literary works. She was awarded Poet of the Year in 2017 by one of the prestigious poetry sites in UK. She is also a regular contributor to a monthly issued magazine in India. She has also published her self-authored books and founded her own private group of a few artists/poets.

ETERNAL CHILDHOOD

Take my soul and set it free, to wander through eras clothed only in the purity of memories.

Let it take me back to when I was a child,

dreaming of stealing a spark of light,

hiding it in the pocket of my dreams.

Carrying it far to paths I have not yet seen,

searching for the mirage of childhood in the soil of villages, in the weathered nests of palm trees at the edge of fields.

I hear the whispers of memories, feel my steps echoing through the days.

If you wish, take my hand and lead me

to the scent of clay and the aroma of old bread, where stories rise from the cracks in the walls, where I wove a cloak for the sky from moonlight, and planted in my soul a childhood that never grows old.

Take me far away, for old wounds, when embraced by the soul, become an endless night. Yet they light moments of darkness

with stars that never fade.

Taghrid Bou Merhi: She is a multilingual poet, writer, author, essayist, editor journalist and translator. She has authored 23 books, translated 35 books to date, and 112 articles to date. Her writings are part of several national and international magazines, newspapers, journals and anthologies. She was chosen among the 50 women from Asia who had a significant impact on the history of modern literature, and she was chosen among the top 20 international journalists from Legacy Crown. She is a global advisor for poetry on CCTV Chinese TV and editor and head of the translation department at various literary newspapers and magazine. She has won many awards for her write-ups.

LETHE'S NUMBNESS

Seductress is oblivion.

She teases, erasing the obvious pain into shards—

red amber rusk in a glass.

Lethe is a seductress,

wears red lipstick, six-inch heels,

sashays in the contours of the mind with a lover mirage.

Erasure of his memories

is the name of her game,

till she pulls the trigger on the last image.

L'Amour Est Morte.

She pours her drink in pills,

pills and potions over love hexes,

letters, and love high,

until she loved the void

and the numbness became she.

Au Revoir Mon Amour.

Tania Alphonsa George: She is a poet and educator from Kerala, India, with a passion for literature, teaching, and intellectual exploration. An "old soul" inspired by jazz, classic '90s music, and philosophy, she holds a Bachelor's and Master's in English, along with a B.Ed. and is currently pursuing her M.Ed. in English, focusing on educational reform. Her works have appeared in journals like Journal of Literature and Aesthetics and GNOSIS Journal. In 2022, Tania co-authored ***Integrity of Words and Blank Verses*** with her grandmother, Gertrude John Morris, marking a cherished literary achievement. She aspires to inspire young minds and impact education through research and creativity.

LEARNING CURVE

Following feelings

Instructing me

To toss all

The time worn

And bogus

Life lessons

And conning

My fancy into

Stirring a smile

Outbreak so

Bright as

If saints had

Clicked pearly

Switches to

Ignite a dynamo

At least seven

Digits powerful

Enough to

Pump my brain

To foster

And budge steps

Toward faces

Spinning and

Signaling more

Harsh and wasted

Pale as chalk tutorials

Thomas M. McDade: He is a seventy-nine-year-old resident of Fredericksburg, VA. He is a graduate of Fairfield University. McDade is twice a U.S. Navy Veteran serving ashore at the Fleet Anti-Air Warfare Training Center, Dam Neck Virginia Beach, VA and aboard the USS Mullinnix (DD-944) and USS Miller (DE/FF-1091). His poetry has been most recently published in The Rat's Ass Review.

STRUGGLE

Not a single word,

Nor a single thought

Has seen the light of day;

Has left imprint on paper,

Since a pretty long time.

The mind has just been a blank.

The invite stares in my face.

But I have nothing to paste;

In that Outbox that is waiting

For a reply to the lady

Who diligently sends a request,

Every month without fail.

It seems I have run out of topics.

Or maybe the thread is broken;

It needs to be repaired.

The pen must get back to paper.

Uma Agarwal Bajaj: I have been contributing to GloMag for almost three years now! And Glory di's trust in me has really made my pen a little creative. I am a Company Secretary by qualification, a homemaker by choice (since the last 20 years). Having been occupied with family and kids, I have now started having some time for myself, now that the kids are all ready to leave the nest. I write both in English and Hindi and hope to better myself with each passing day. Apart from this, I have, since last year, been involved with the activities related to the Inner Engineering program by Sadhguru.

BHOGI DAWN

The day before Pongal is dear

Religiously I celebrate every year

Ridding myself of many a fear

An act of penance in the fog drear

Through the act of lighting a fire

Emerge from the muck and mire

Old clothes along with old ideas

Things, thoughts, and many foibles

Declutter with loud parai beats

Heralding hope and new feats

Thai month sun's perihelion orbit

This day of all is my favourite

Curling smoke rises to heighten

The brightness of Bhogi dawn

After an hour the ashes cool

A floor kolam I sit down to doodle

Full of dreams so colourful

Renewed, rejuvenated, grateful

Uma Vangal: She is a part-time filmmaker and public speaker, sometime professor, critic and curator, an occasional gender activist and a full-time mother and grandmother. She wears many hats and writing permeates all her work and interests, but with the aim of making a difference. Her work, be it documentary films, poetry, mentoring, yoga training or workshops, echoes an abiding interest in ancient wisdom and her guiding tenet “Be true to yourself”.

WHOSE GRIEF IS IT ANYWAY?

Eyes that carry rivers of grief

But do not evaporate

Nor condense

Bruises so big

That skirts

Of mini length

Or till the calf

Will not hide

Wounds inflicted

By each autumn leaf

That pulled away from the parent tree

By the icicles on terra

By inches of snow

That would not melt

Universal wounds

Personal lesions

Really in the end

Much the same thing

Vandana Kumar: She is a French teacher, translator, recruitment consultant, Indie Film Producer, cinephile and poet residing in New Delhi, India. Her poems have been published in national and international websites, journals and anthologies of repute. She has been a part of seminal feminist anthologies like the Indie Blu(e) publication 'The Kali Project'. Her collection of poems ***Mannequin Of Our Times*** (February 2023) - has won multiple awards and a Pushcart nomination in the poetry category. She is currently the Poetry editor for the Reader's Choice magazine. Her literary travels took her to Athens, Greece where she was a Guest of Honor at the Global Vision Summit 2024.

HEARTACHE: AN ELEGY

Can we walk together again, you and I,

As we did in days past

Without thought for tomorrow?

Can we hold hands under the sun,

Milder than all our desires,

Heat exchanged through fingers

Swinging in the bright light?

Can we talk about nothing

Looking into each other's eyes

For hours and hours of laughter

At jokes none would understand?

Can we lie on your porch again

Counting the stars at night,

Drawing patterns in the sky,

Tempting the fates to spite?

Time's wingspan nicked us too soon,

Leaving us unprepared

For life’s tremendous ups and downs,

With you I felt brave, without you, lost.

In every face I see, I search for you,

In every voice I hear, I seek our song.

Vidya Hariharan: Vidya Hariharan is an enthusiastic traveller, coffee guzzler and manic reader. In her spare time she wrestles with crossword puzzles and has won prizes. The poetry gene jumped two generations as her great grandfather P. S. Rama Iyer was a Malayalam language poet and author. She lives and works in Mumbai, India. Some of her work can be found in Cafe Dissensus, Setu, Poetry Super Highway and Under the Basho.

MADRAS

It's a love-hate relationship I have
with this city where I grew up a schoolgirl
in two plaits and pattu paavada chattai
To leave and return later
A saree-clad young bride — a new life

in a city of sweltering humidity
assailed by the polluted smell of the Coovum
and the "pathu rupa mela potu kudu ma"
demands of the auto drivers that run

the city where I found my love.
Vella vetti vella sattai
Twirling his moustache
"Mara Thamizhan da naan,"
He would say, sipping filter kaapi in a tumbler.

And though I can’t speak as much Thamizh

And though I am not so much saree-clad anymore

I would loop my arm around his

And smile,

“Naanum Thamizhachi”.

Vidya Shankar: A Touchstone Award longlisted poet, she is an Associate Editor for haikuKATHA journal, a freelance copyeditor, and an English language teacher in Chennai. Author of two mainstream poetry books, and editor of six collections, she is widely published in reputed anthologies. Vidya has been featured in a unique coffee table book on inspiring women of Chennai. She finds meaning to her life through yoga and mandalas.

Instagram: @vidya.shankar.author

FLASHBACK

We followed, at the end of Winter,

The lonely road through the trees

While Spring warmed up to welcome us

With its usual bouquet

Of laughter and hope - -

That night

You stumbled into my dreams

From which I never really

Woke up. Some stories

Wait in silence

For all the shadows to disappear

Before they blurt out the truth - -

Some stories have no deadlines

But life does: Why do words

Need us more than we need them?

Vijay Nair: I retired as an Associate Professor in English. I was awarded the Reuel International Prize for Writing & Literature in the year 2016. I was the 'Critic of the Year' in 2016, 2017 & 2018 at Destiny Poets, UK and was also adjudged the 'Poet of the Year' in 2018 by the same poetry group. My poems have been nominated on 8 occasions as 'Poem of the Month' at Poets, Artists Unplugged. Three of my poems have been included in the PG syllabus of BBMK University, Dhanbad. My short stories have appeared in Dynami Zois [Virasat], The Road Taken [Impish Lass] and in Cocoon Stories: Imprints of Childhood [AuthorsPress].

WARRIOR OF LIGHT

Set my veins on fire

Softly, my warrior of light

Sing to me in tongues that caress

Soothe my aching heart

Sorrow nestles deep within

Slithering through my fingers

Slowly grasping at the light

Shall I have to wait forever?

Songs of yearning echo through these hallways

Shouts of despair, sometimes

Smothering all the life within

Statue-like I am frozen here

Sweet hope rises misty in the far reaches

Somehow I raise my head

Searching for you in the darkness

Sure am I that you will come, my warrior of light.

Vineetha Mekkoth: Vineetha Mekkoth, poet, writer, translator, editor, and reviewer based in Calicut, Kerala, works as State Tax Officer in the State GST Department. She has translated for the Kerala Sahitya Akademi. Her poems and short stories have been included in various anthologies. Her debut poetry collection is ***Ashtavakra and Other Poems***. Her book ***Penpiravi - Birth of A Woman*** won the Reuel International Prize for Translation and is the translation of the Malayalam poet Girija Pathekkara's poetry collection. She is co-editor of and contributor to the short story collections, Cocoon Stories: Imprints of Childhood, He, She and It: The Grammar of Marriage, and Aquality: Tales from the Depths published in March, 2024.

ciao! ☺